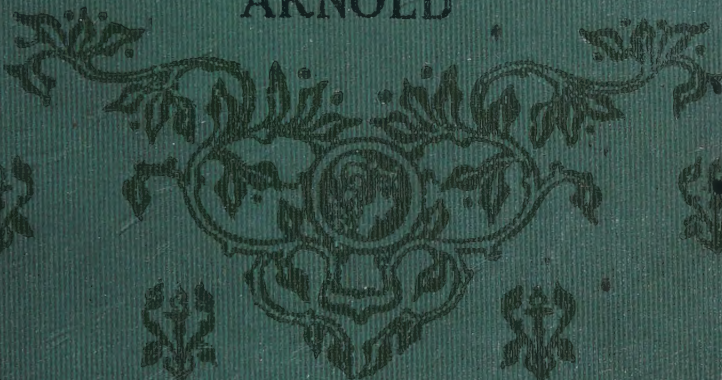


The Silver Series of Classics

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

ARNOLD



EDITED BY
JOSEPH B. SEABURY

Silver, Bardett & Company


Anderson College and Theological Seminary

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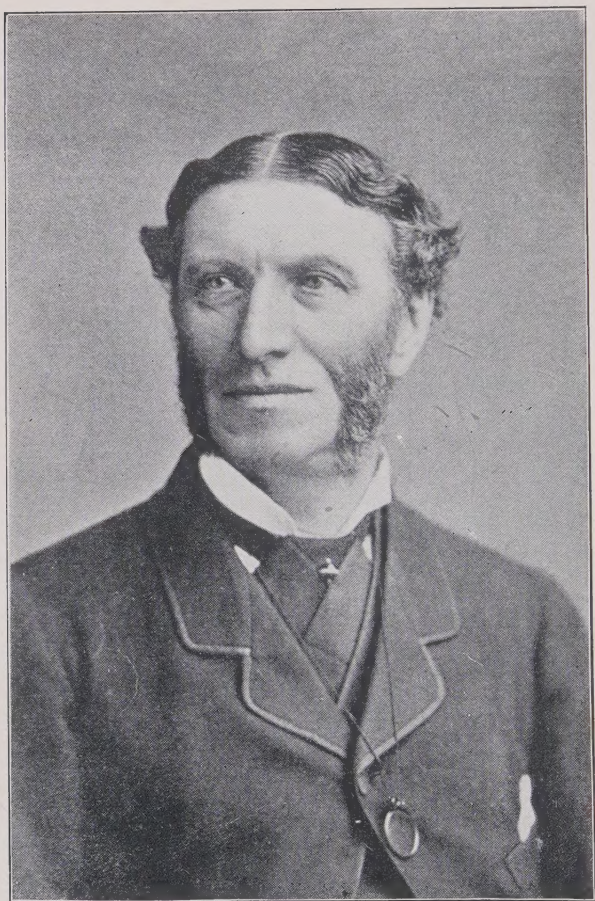
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MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Arnold, Matthew, 1822-1888 - 7058

The Silver Series of English and American Classics

MATTHEW ARNOLD'S

Anderson College and Theological Seminary

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

AND OTHER POEMS

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

JOSEPH B. SEABURY



SILVER, BURDETT AND COMPANY

NEW YORK

BOSTON


CHICAGO

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INTRODUCTION.



BIOGRAPHICAL.

It was the good fortune of "the forceful and impelling" Thomas Arnold, the head-master of Rugby, to have a most admirable biographer — Dean Stanley. An equally just and discriminating life of his oldest and very distinguished son, Matthew, would no doubt have been published, had he not distinctly requested that he should not be made the subject of a biography. With all due regard for the letter of this express wish, many of his admirers, with considerate but fixed biographical intent, have given to the world abbreviated narratives of his commanding career, which in itself constitutes their legitimate demand. Arnold's published letters, the most reliable data we have for our acquaintance with the absorbing occupations of his time and thought, whet our appetite for the longer and more complete memorabilia which his modesty and fine sense of literary form have denied us.

With the deepest fervor of filial esteem, Matthew Arnold wrote appreciatively of his father's lofty qualities. He compared him to a sturdy oak with its spreading branches, under which many lesser men might take shelter; the man "who speaks without being shackled,"

whose praises the gifted son sings in his "Rugby Chapel," written fifteen years after his father's death:—

"O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now ? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain !
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labor-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm !"

At his father's home in Laleham, near Staines, Middlesex, Matthew Arnold was born, Christmas Eve, 1822. Laleham is situated on "the wide sheet of the gray Thames," a score of miles west of London, in a typical English valley. The picturesque region in which his earliest years were spent deeply impressed Arnold's mind. Its fruits are apparent in those exquisite nature poems on which his fame as a poet so largely rests. In the year 1828 he removed to Rugby, it being the year of his father's appointment to the headmastership of the school he did so much to make famous. Two years later Matthew Arnold went back to Laleham to pursue his studies under his uncle, the Rev. John Buckland. At the age of fourteen he entered Winchester School. The town was founded by the Romans and named by the Saxons *Winte-cæster*, "the City of the Winte," hence Winchester. Temples to Apollo and Concord once stood where the great cathedral (1070–1098) now stands. These tangible memorials of other days appealed to the classic taste of the young student. Dr. Moberly, afterward Bishop of Salisbury, was his instructor. Arnold's preëminent scholar-

ship released him from the "austere system" of fagging, then an "institution" of preparatory schools in England, and regarded by many as essential to the equipment of a student for the thumps and thrusts, the moil and sweat, of public life. A year later Arnold entered Rugby, with which his expanding literary powers are so intimately associated. He was always ardently devoted to Rugby, "so unworldly, so sound, so pure." Here (1840) he produced his first poem, "Alaric at Rome," for which he received a prize. It was published anonymously, and is commended by critics as showing talents of a high order. Having received an open classical scholarship, he entered Oxford in the year 1841. He was matriculated at Balliol, one of the oldest colleges of the University, and superior to all others in classical scholarship. In the year 1843, by his poem "Cromwell" he won that most coveted honor—the Newdigate prize. An edition of seven hundred and fifty copies was immediately sold. The copyright yielded him £10. A friend at Oxford thus speaks of Arnold's University life: "His perfect self-possession, the sallies of his ready wit, the humorous turn which he could give to any subject that he handled, his gayety, exuberance, versatility, audacity, and unfailing command of words, made him one of the most popular and successful undergraduates that Oxford has ever known." The great University won his heart—Oxford, "so venerable, so lovely." He was graduated with high honors in 1844. The following year he was chosen a Fellow of Oriel, exactly thirty years after his father had received the same distinction.

Among his associates at Oxford were Dean Church of St. Paul's, London, John Earle, Professor of Anglo-Saxon at the University, and Arthur Hugh Clough, the poet. With the latter he formed a close friendship. Upon the death of Clough, Arnold wrote a touching monody, one of the most beautiful elegiac poems in the language—"Thyrsis."

Each of the four places where he was trained made its contribution to the vitality and the symmetry of his manhood. Laleham opened to him the book of nature; Winchester inspired him with love of classic lore; Rugby taught him to know men; Oxford set before him the highest intellectual and philosophical standards.

Upon his graduation from Oxford he taught the classics in the Fifth Form at Rugby. Two years later he was appointed private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, Lord President of the Council. "The Strayed Reveller" appeared in 1848, in an edition of five hundred copies, the only clew to its authorship being the letter "A" on the title-page. In 1851 he was married to Frances Lucy, daughter of Mr. Justice Wightman. Of their six children three boys, Basil, Thomas, and William, were removed by death.

The same year of his marriage Arnold was offered the position of Inspector of Schools, which he accepted and held for thirty-five years. It brought to him unwearied toil; but he devoted himself unsparingly to the most uncongenial tasks, with singular fidelity and dignity. His correspondence abounds in references to the irksomeness of his official duties. He speaks of "being driven furious by

seven hundred closely written grammar-papers to be looked over." In November, 1870, he writes: "It is a long, tedious business hearing the students give specimen lessons at the Training Schools. There is little real utility in it and a great deal of claptrap, and that makes the expenditure of time the more disagreeable to me. However, I get a good many notes written, and odds and ends of things done." The fact that Mrs. Arnold sometimes accompanied him was "the only thing that made this life anything but positive purgatory." More than once he is reported to have remarked at public gatherings, "Gentlemen, you see before you an humble Inspector of Schools"; and yet this man of lofty ideals set before him a noble reform — to raise the standard of middle-class education. He considered the defects in the social, political, and moral life of England due to deficiencies in early education. In 1859 Arnold visited the schools of foreign countries. He made a study of educational methods, especially in France. He became familiar with her domestic and peasant life, and noted the relation of her schools to her civilization. As a result of his long service for popular education he published many reports which are an invaluable thesaurus of judicious opinion upon the educational problems of modern times and the wisest means of solving them.

In 1852 Arnold issued "*Empedocles on Ætna and Other Poems*." The first series of Poems appeared in 1853, and the second series in 1855; the latter contained nine new poems, among them some of his most noted productions, such as "*Sohrab and Rustum*" and "*The Scholar Gypsy*." The impression made by these poems gave him a high place

among English writers. It secured him the appointment as Professor of Poetry at Oxford. His initial lecture was upon "The Modern Element in Literature." This distinguished chair Mr. Arnold filled for two terms of five years each (1857-1868). The statutes of the University forbade his holding the position longer. It would have been his choice to devote his life to literature, as Wordsworth and Shelley had done, but he was destined to tread a more rigid path and to lead "a hampered existence." While at Oxford he published "Merope," a tragedy after the Greek, and "Lectures on Translating Homer."

The year 1865 was a notable one in the career of Matthew Arnold. In that year he gave to the public his epoch-making volume, "Essays in Criticism." This was the precursor of many works of a similar character, which abounded in impassioned invectives against the unsteadiness and the foibles of his time. He wrote trenchant philippics upon social criticism. He was unsparing in his treatment of literary criticism. His early education in the home of a clergyman, his familiarity with the religious thinking of his day at Oxford, and his native predilections, led him to apply his art to theology. This he did with such acuteness, originality, and disregard of traditional beliefs, that ecclesiastical England shook its head and stamped its foot in indignant dismay. Four books of a theological character appeared on alternate years: "St. Paul and Protestantism" (1871); "Literature and Dogma" (1873); "God and the Bible" (1875); "Essays on the Church" (1877). The author's aim was sincere,—to save the church from a mechanical and creed-shackled interpretation of the Bible.

He stood between dogmatic theology on the one hand, and materialistic science on the other. He did not aim to reconcile them, but to keep them irrevocably apart, and to interpret each in a rational manner. In the eyes of many devout believers, his method was destructive to faith and threatened to overturn the whole fabric of Christianity.

Arnold made two visits to the United States, one in 1883 and the other in 1886. Before coming to our shores he applied to American life his practised art of criticism: "I do not think the bulk of the American nation at present gives one the impression of being made up of fine enough clay to serve the highest purposes of civilization in the way you expect: they are what I call *Philistines*, I suspect, — too many of them." Justice demands that we finish the excerpt: "But the condition of life of the majority there is the wholesome and good one: there is immense hope for the future in that fact." He hated the "blatant publicity" of American life, the bravado of American manners. While we were in the throes of our Civil War, he uttered this sentiment, "I hope the Americans will not cease to be afflicted until they learn thoroughly, that man shall not live by buncombe alone." After he came to see us at closer range he spoke more considerately of the characteristic features of America and Americans: "There is an immense public there, and this alone makes them of importance, but besides that, I have been struck both with their intellectual liveliness and ardor . . . and also the good effect their wonderful success has produced on them."

During Arnold's busy life he lived at Dover, then in London, then at Harrow (that he might be near his sons

at school there), and finally (1873) he moved to Cobham, Surrey, to Pains Hill Cottage, where he lived to the end of his life.

His later works are "The Study of Celtic Literature," "Friendship's Garland," "Mixed Essays" and "Irish Essays," "Discourses in America," "Complete Poems," and "Selected Poems."

The death of Matthew Arnold from heart disease came suddenly at Liverpool, April 15, 1888. He had gone thither to meet his daughter on her arrival from New York. The news of his demise fell as a painful surprise upon his many friends and followers. His body rests in the churchyard at Laleham, near the scenes of his childhood. Over his grave is the inscription:—

There is sprung up a light for the righteous and joyful gladness for such as are true-hearted.

CRITICAL.

The prominence of Matthew Arnold among the *literati* of his time is a pronounced literary achievement. He was not fashioned by nature to be a poet of the people. He was so unique, so stately, in his personality, so classic in his mode of thinking, so esoteric in his idioms, that he seemed to build a wall of partition between the public and his pen. As a writer he was *in propria persona*: a representative of no school of poets: typical of no genus of essayists. No drift of thought, peculiar to his age, caught him and carried him along with it. His virile independence kept him totally unbiassed, unreined. He himself

confessed that a popular poet must infuse into his songs more of the element of joyousness than he could summon. Like all true poets, he must give free scope to the divine afflatus which glows within. He caught the ear of thinking England and America and held it until the end of his life: he holds it now. The best judges of fine writing, listeners to the voice of the muse Erato, write the names of the nineteenth century English poets of the first rank in this order—Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold.

Were we to accord Arnold his place in literature by the amount of literary work accomplished, or by the degree of attention awarded him, or by the piquant phrases he has planted in our language, we should regard him as the leading force in *belles lettres* in England during the last fifty years. In the republic of letters he has been influential by reason of his assertive individuality, his grace of verbal form, his aim to keep before the public mind “an ideal of excellence the most high and the most rare.” These considerations alone do not explain the true sphere in literature which Arnold fills. Each one must make for himself a critical and sympathetic study of his writings, pass under his spell, view life as he viewed it.

In Matthew Arnold two lines of thought continually reveal themselves; one may be expressed by the word *nature*, the other by the word *reform*. The first marks the meridian of his poetry, the second of his prose. These two modes of writing stood entirely apart. He was poet and critic: not a poet *in* criticism, nor a critic *in* poetry. One can read an entire essay of Arnold's and not discover

the poet in a line or phrase: one can bury himself in a poem and not suspect its author could be a caustic critic. But we cannot read either poem or essay without finding, in the one, nature's voice, and, in the other, a cry for the betterment of man. We may therefore study Arnold as a Poet of Nature and a Critic of his Times.

I. A POET OF NATURE. — Arnold's first literary venture was in poetry. When the political and educational contests of his day shall have been forgotten, and its social problems solved, Arnold the critic will be absorbed in Arnold the poet. As a poet will he be known to future ages.

To know Arnold intimately we must go with him into the fields, or wander with him upon the mountains, or stand by his side as he looks off upon the sea. Sweeping the whole horizon, we may think in his words: —

“O world as God has made it. All is beauty,
And knowing this is love, and love is duty.”

Arnold's view of nature was broad, comprehensive. Nothing in her wide domain escaped his poetic vision. He took in her undulating plateaus, her wilderness of sterile clay, and her fields of fertile loam.

“Far, far from here,
The Adriatic breaks in a warm bay
Among the green Illyrian hills ; and there
The sunshine in the happy glens is fair,
And by the sea, and in the brakes,
The grass is cool, the seaside air
Buoyant and fresh, the mountain flowers
More virginal and sweet than ours.”

Nature's outward visage, her form and frame, appealed to his analytic mind. He speaks of "the unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea." It is the enduring reality of the sea's existence, its wide expanse, its ungovernable turbulence, that profoundly engaged his thought. The eye is entranced, but the soul is rarely moved. The description is flawless; the words chosen to depict its beauties are a marvel of precise adjustment of diction to sentiment, but the lower depths of feeling are not fathomed. Arnold's description of nature differs from that of Wordsworth as the carbon likeness differs from the warm tints of the portrait, in which the cheek is animated with a vital spark, the lip is health-red, and the eye waits to be recognized. Greatly as Arnold admired Wordsworth, he did not follow him into the deeper teachings of nature. To Arnold nature was steadfast: she had solemn lessons of permanency to offer him, as he sat at her feet. He found satisfaction in her ethical repose. He escaped from the turmoil of life, "the complaining millions of men," their vain competitions, their fruitless bargainings, their low ambitions, and found relief in the *constancy* of nature. But it was nature *as* nature, circumscribed by her physical proportions, not nature a teacher of God. This high order of intellectualism characterized his view of man. He laid open the passions of the soul with splendid exactness, but he did not direct us to the cure of the soul's ailments. Nature viewed synthetically, or organically, or symmetrically, or æsthetically, does not bring peace to weary men.

Arnold's mind was naturally introspective. He loved solitude. Outwardly his life seemed cheery, inwardly he

was "lonely as a cloud." He plunged into busy tasks, became absorbed in the routine of a humdrum life. And yet, "we mortal millions live alone," is his refrain. He dwelt upon the sombre, the sad, the incomplete, the unattained. In the world of color he chose the gray and the drab. In the world of song he early struck the minor key, and on that key he dwelt until he swept the whole gamut of the musical scale. He smote with repeated emphasis the notes that make up the dirge rather than those that compose the anthem. Standing on the beach at Dover and looking across the channel "where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land," he exclaims:—

"Ah, love, let us be true
To one another ! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain ;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confus'd alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night."

Arnold's philosophy of man was depressing. It was clouded over with an ever-present consciousness that we are "still standing for some false, impossible shore." Futility is the lot of "that poor, inattentive, immoral creature, man," who lives in a tangle of mysteries, a maze of interrogations. Arnold betrayed the pain of those who find no solution for these problems. Overwhelmed at times by the weight of the world's woe, dwelling beneath a burden of inability to find relief, he flees to nature and pours out his lament:—

“Calm soul of all things ! make it mine
To feel, amid the city’s jar,
That there abides a peace of thine
Man did not make, and cannot mar.

“The will to neither strive nor cry,
The power to feel with others give,
Calm, calm me more, nor let me die
Before I have begun to live.”

There is in his poetry an undertone of the unsatisfied:—

“I ask not each kind soul to keep
Tearless, when busy death he hears.
Let those who will, if any, weep !
There are worse plagues on earth than tears !

“I ask but that my death may find
The freedom to my life denied :
Ask but the folly of mankind
Then, then at last to quit my side.”

It was remarked by Lord Beaconsfield that Matthew Arnold enjoyed the rare distinction of being ranked as a classic in his lifetime. In the use of English in its matchless beauty Arnold has no superior. He himself has justly said: “My poems are making their way, I think, though slowly, and are, perhaps, never to make way very far. There must always be some people, however, to whom the literalness and sincerity of them have a charm.” These two qualities, literalness and sincerity, are those that impress his readers. They spring unbidden from his ingenuous soul. He was a man of simple candor, of righteous sanity, and of native simplicity: “I take myself to witness that I have loved no darkness, sophisticated no

truth, nursed no delusion, allowed no fear." Mr. William Sharp has called him "an impassioned Marcus Aurelius, wrought by poetic vision and emotion to poetic music, rather than a Heine, or a Shelley, or a Burns." His abhorrence of shams drove him to the extreme of disgust of the world. He sought man in his distress, applied to his disorders the panacea of nature; it did not satisfy. But the appealing nobility of Arnold's fidelity to conscience, the transparency and openness of his soul, make a profound impression on every studious reader of his poetical works.

The purity of Arnold's style is due in large measure to his fondness for the Greek language and literature. In his constitutional tastes he was a modern Greek. Homer was his ideal in poetry. He no doubt heartily approved Pope's sentiment:—

"Be Homer's works your study and delight;
Read them by day and meditate by night;
Thence form your judgment, thence your maxims bring,
And trace the Muses upward to their spring."

To understand many of Arnold's allusions one must be familiar with Greek mythology. Building his style upon Greek models, our author produced poems purely Homeric in their epic grandeur and unaffectedness, their orderliness, their euphony. He gave nothing to the publisher that was not like hammered gold under his patient process of preparation. He made a severe task out of every poem he wrote. His poems, "The Better Part," "The Sick King of Bokhara," and "Obermann," are among the many that might be chosen to illustrate the classic finish of his style.

II. A CRITIC OF HIS TIMES. — Arnold ceased to write poetry after twenty years of distinction in that noble art. He suddenly stepped into the arena of criticism. He had defined poetry as “the criticism of life.” He took up the task of criticism in the most soldierly manner, with naked prose as his controversial weapon. He became the most noted critic of his time. His pen was trenchant but not churlish; lacerating, but not sinister. “Even in our ridicule,” he says, “we must preserve a sweet good humor.”

Arnold's definition of criticism must light the way into all interpretation of his theories and purpose — “a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world.” With this aim in view, he surrendered his gifted mind to the high calling of bettering life about him. He attacked men and manners, society and government, literature and theology. He had a mission, — to detect and expose shallowness, insincerity, all mechanical watchwords and devices: “In particular, the slovenly and pretentious use of terms and phrases which were only half understood.” In his sight, boorishness was a sin, ignorance a vice. In matters pertaining to education he was finical in his taste. He would banish Goldsmith's poetry from our schools, because of the imperfect measure in which much of it was written. He believed that no woman was capable of imparting instruction in the public schools.

He labored hard to induce his countrymen to distinguish between “the good and the bad, the noble and the ignoble, the ephemeral and the enduring, in what they read.” One word sphered his ideal — *Hellenism* — that

perfect thing, *Greek culture*, of which he was the modern high priest. He held up to view the weakness of Puritanism, of Liberalism, of Individualism. He measured the height of every modern institution by Greek standards, whose unit of measurement was culture. "Human life," he remarks, "in the hands of Hellenism, is invested with a kind of ærial ease, clearness, and radiancy; it is full of what we call sweetness and light."

Arnold's attack on the Philistinism¹ of his time was unsparing, caustic. He despised "the grossness of the British multitude." He stigmatized the aristocracy as "Barbarians." The leading writers of the day did not escape his critical pen. Tennyson was deficient in intellectual grasp, Ruskin "febrile," "irritable," "weak." Mrs. Browning he regarded as "hopelessly confirmed in her aberration from health, nature, beauty, and truth." Macaulay was "uninteresting, mainly, I think, from a dash of intellectual vulgarity which I find in all his performance." After reading these and many other denunciatory criticisms of writers, we are reminded of the appropriate exclamation, familiar to all students of Latin, — *Delenda est Carthago*.

Arnold was not always the remorseless critic. He had his preferences among modern writers. He called Goethe, whom he chivalrously admired, —

"Europe's sagest head,
Physician of the iron age. . . .

¹ "On the side of beauty and taste, vulgarity; on the side of morals and feeling, coarseness; on the side of mind and spirit, unintelligence, — this is Philistinism." — *M. A.*

He took the suffering human race,
He read each wound, each weakness clear,
And struck his finger on the place
And said, *Thou ailest here, and here.*"

No poet of the Victorian age was in Arnold's estimation the equal of Wordsworth. To him he rendered a sweet and tender tribute; he who

"Spoke and loosed our hearts in tears,
He laid us as we lay at birth
On the cool flowery lap of earth. . . .
Our youth returned, for there was shed
On spirits that had long been dead,
Spirits dried up and closely furl'd,
The freshness of the early world."

Arnold's personal charm was irresistible. He had courtly and magnetic manners, and a large heart. His charities were many and unostentatious. Max Müller says of him: "He was beautiful as a young man, strong and manly, yet full of dreams and schemes. His Olympian manners began even at Oxford; there was no harm in them; they were natural, not put on. The very sound of his voice and the wave of his arm were Jove-like."

Arnold's home life was affectionate and ardent. His letters are brimming with expressions of devotion. During the long years, while making extended tours abroad, he wrote his mother letters of exquisite grace. He was a fond parent and was almost crushed by the death of his promising boys. He loved animals, one of his most interesting poems being written upon the death of a favorite dog.

A writer more brilliant, more scholarly, more pains-

taking, more intense, more unerring in purpose, has not lived in our century. His friend of many years, Archdeacon Farrar, has said of him: "He was an admirable specimen of a perfect English gentleman—a man of fine genius, of delightful bearing, of stainless integrity, and of a genuinely kind and loving heart."

ESTIMATES.

"As one looks at his [Arnold's] more philosophical and lyrical poems—the profounder part of his work—and endeavors to determine their character and sources alike, it is plain to see that, in the old phrase, 'the pride of the intellect' lifts its lonely column over the desolation of every page. The man of the academy is here, as in the prose, after all. He reveals himself in the literary motive, the bookish atmosphere of the verse, in its vocabulary, its elegance of structure, its precise phrase and its curious allusions (involving foot-notes), and, in fact, throughout all its form and structure. . . . It is frequently liquid and melodious, but there is no burst of native song in it anywhere. It is the work of a true poet, nevertheless: but there are many voices for the Muse. It is sincere, it is touched with reality: it is the mirror of a phase of life in our times, and not in our times only, but whenever the intellect seeks expression for its sense of the limitation of its own career, and its sadness in a world which it cannot solve."

— *George E. Woodberry.*

"Certainly he [Arnold] is an illustrious example of the power of training and the human will. Lacking the case of

the lyrist, the boon of a melodious voice, he has, by a *tour de force*, composed poems which show little deficiency of either gift, — has won reputation and impressed himself upon his age, as the apostle of culture, spiritual freedom, and classical restraint. There is a passion of the voice and a passion of the brain. If Arnold, as a singer, lacks spontaneity, his intellectual processes, on the contrary, are spontaneous, and sometimes rise to a loftiness which no mere lyrist, without unusual mental faculty, can ever attain. His head not only predominates but exalts his somewhat languid heart. . . . In fine, we may regard Matthew Arnold's poetry as an instance of what elevated verse, in this period, can be written with comparatively little spontaneity, by a man whose vigorous intellect is etherealized by culture and deliberately creates for itself an atmosphere of sweetness and light."

— *Edmund Clarence Stedman.*

"The power of poetic expression is founded on a delicate simplicity of taste. He [Arnold] shows the finest insight into Greek poetry, and has a highly cultivated appreciation both for the specified aroma of words and for the poetical atmosphere of thought." — *R. H. Hutton.*

"——that natural light of mind, that power of reception and reflection of things or thoughts, which I most admire in so much of Arnold's work. I mean by it much more than mere facility and transparency, more than brilliance, more than ease or excellence of style. . . . No poem in any language can be more perfect as a model of style than [Thyrsis]. . . . No countryman of ours since Keats

died has made or has found words fall into such faultless folds and forms of harmonious line. . . . No one has in like measure that tender and final quality of touch which tempers the expressive light and suffuses the refluent shade. . . . No poet has ever come so near the perfect Greek."

— *Algernon Charles Swinburne.*

"Arnold is preëminently a critical force, a force of clear reason and of steady discernment. He is not an author whom we read for the man's sake, or for the flavor of his personality, for this is not always agreeable, but for his unfailing intelligence and critical acumen; and because, to borrow a sentence of Goethe, he helps us to 'attain certainty and security in the appreciation of things exactly as they are.' Everywhere in his books we are brought under the influence of a mind which, indeed, does not fill and dilate us, but which clears our vision, which sets going a process of crystallization in our thoughts, and brings our knowledge, on a certain range of subjects, to a higher state of clearness and purity. . . . Arnold is probably the purest classic writer that English literature, as yet, has to show; classic not merely in the repose and purity of his style, but in the unity and simplicity of his mind."

— *John Burroughs.*

"It may be overmuch
He shunned the common stain and smutch,
From soilure of ignoble touch
Too grandly free,
Too loftily secure in such cold purity.

But he preserved from chance control
The fortress of his stablished soul,
In all things sought to see the Whole,
 Brooked no disguise,
And set his heart upon the goal,
 Not on the prize."

— *William Watson*, "In Laleham Churchyard."

THE STORY OF SOHRAB AND RUSTUM.

In a letter to his mother written at Hampton, May, 1853, Matthew Arnold says: "All my spare time has been spent on a poem which I have just finished, and which I think by far the best thing I have yet done, and that it will be generally liked, though one never can be sure of this. I have had the greatest pleasure in composing it—a rare thing with me, and, as I think, a good test of the pleasure what you write is likely to afford to others: but then the story is a very noble and excellent one."

The judgment of a reading age accords with his own. The reception given to "Sohrab and Rustum" was responsive, sympathetic, glowing. It added the capital to the graceful Corinthian column of his literary fame. Its dramatic action, its pathos, its Oriental aroma, gave it a foremost place among the narrative poems of our day.

The original poem as told by Firdusi, in the Persian Epic, the "Shah-Namah," or "Book of Kings," is as follows:—

It came about, on a certain day, Rustum resolved to go forth and hunt. He made ready his quiver with

arrows, saddled Ruksh, his fleet horse, mounted and plunged into the wilds of Iran, near the borders of Turan. He pursued the wild asses, slew one, of which he partook. Then he lay down to rest. While he slept, seven knights of Turan saw Ruksh feeding in the field near by, coveted him, captured him, and led him into the Turanian city of Samengan. When Rustum awoke he was filled with sorrow and wrath and exclaimed, "How can I stand against the Turks, and how can I traverse the desert alone?"¹ In his dismay he followed the hoof-prints to the gates of the city. When it was noised abroad that Rustum had come to Samengan on foot, the king and the nobles went forth to meet him. They listened in breathless shame to the story of the theft, and Rustum swore a solemn oath and vowed that if Ruksh was not recovered, "many heads should quit their trunks." The king spoke words of solace and cheer to the disconsolate hero, declaring that none of his guilty subjects should go unpunished. At the king's solicitation, Rustum cast away all suspicion and accompanied his royal helper. In the splendid palace he feasted with his host. There he met Tahmineh, the king's daughter, whose charms he could not resist. A magnificent nuptial ceremony consummated this most natural meeting. It detracts somewhat from the "naturalness" of this romantic union to know that the adroit Tahmineh, having lost her heart over the heroic deeds of this famous brave, a

¹ This and the other quotations are taken from "Stories retold from Firdusi" by Helen Zimmern, whose work has been mainly adapted for the purposes of this sketch.

very demi-god among hunters, schemed for the capture of Ruksh by the seven knights, believing it would bring his master to the palace. The plot resulted as she anticipated. "The moon of beauty" won the man with the lion-heart — and he won his horse.

The passion for war still abode in Rustum's breast. It was stronger than the desire to remain in the luxurious royal residence. Ere he went forth, he gave to his "fair of face" an amulet of onyx, saying: "Cherish this jewel, and if heaven send thee a daughter, fasten it within her locks, and it will shield her from evil; but if a son be granted thee, fasten it upon his arm, that he may wear it like his father."

Heaven sent to Tahmineh a son whom she named Sohrab, because "his mouth was wreathed with smiles." This boy was phenomenally endowed: he had a mighty frame and Herculean strength. When one month old he was like a boy of twelve years, and at five years he was skilled in the arts of war. When Sohrab began to realize his superiority over his fellows, he said to his mother: "Since I am taller and stouter than my peers, teach me my race and lineage, and what I shall say when men ask me the name of my sire." Then his proud mother told him he was the offspring of "Rustum the Glorious," whom none equalled in all the earth. It fired the youthful courage of Sohrab. Whereupon he resolved to go forth and find his father.

Fearing that the intrepid Rustum would come and take away the child, if he knew it were a boy, the short-sighted Tahmineh had sent word to him that his offspring was a

girl. In this state of ignorance he remained until the ill-fated moment of the battle on the bank of the Oxus.

A horse was found suited to the valor of the hero, Sohrab. He sprang upon his back, exclaiming, "Now that I own a horse like thee, the world shall be made dark to many." With an army he had gathered he went forth, resolving to make war on Kai Kaous, King of Iran, subdue him, and place his father on the throne. He was endowed with the treasures of the Turanian king, who had opened his coffers and given freely to the young hero. But the king nourished a cunning purpose. He revealed it to his braves in crafty whispers: "Into our hands hath it been given to settle the course of the world. For it is known unto me that Sohrab is sprung from Rustum the Pehliva, but from Rustum must it be hidden who it is that goeth out against him, then peradventure he will perish by the hands of this young lion, and Iran, devoid of Rustum, will fall a prey into my hands. Then we will subdue Sohrab, also, and all the world will be ours." But Sohrab's ambition was a match for the king's. Having conquered Iran, he hoped with Rustum's aid to overcome Turan and reign as king.

With his confident Tartar hosts in their bright-hued regalia, under their martial plumes, and with their shining spears, Sohrab pushed toward Iran, scattering desolation as he went, doing deeds of valor and winning praise of men. He entered the country, subdued and occupied the famous, well-nigh impregnable White Castle. Terror spread among the Persians. They could not resist the onward march of the cohorts of Sohrab. In their dismay the Persians ap-

pealed to their warrior, Rustum, to whom Kai Kaous sent this missive: "When thou shalt receive this letter, stay not to speak the word that hangeth upon thy lips; and if thou bearest roses in thy hands not to smell them, but haste thee to help us in our need." Rustum received the messengers with true Oriental hospitality. They feasted many days. When the great warrior came into the presence of the king, he found him enraged at the long delay. He spoke words of defiance and threatened his life. To whom Rustum spoke these words of scorn: "I am a free man and no slave, and am servant alone unto God; and without Rustum Kai Kaous is as nothing. And the world is subject unto me, and Ruksh is my throne, and my sword is my seal, and my helmet my crown. . . . But now I am weary of thy follies, and I will turn me away from Iran, and when this Turk shall have put you under his yoke I shall not learn thereof." Then he turned on his heel and stalked away, leaped upon his charger and vanished. But the exigency was great; the king and his court were in terror; they took solemn counsel together and resolved to recall Rustum. They went to him again, calmed his angry spirit, and prevailed upon him to come to the rescue of Iran. The king made humble acknowledgments to the irate hero, and gave him costly gifts. Rustum returned and put himself in readiness for the contest.

"Then when the sun had risen and clothed the world with love, the clarions of war were sounded throughout the city, and men made them ready to go forth in enmity before the Turks." The two armored hosts stood face to face. The fate of the hour was to be decided by a single combat. Soh-

rab stepped forth with an imperious challenge on his lips. It was accepted by the undaunted Rustum, who eyed his foe, saying: "O young man, the air is warm and soft, but the earth is cold. I have pity upon thee, and would not take from thee the boon of life. Yet if we combat together, surely thou wilt fall by my hands, for none have withstood my power." Something in the aspect of the elder warrior deeply impressed the younger, who exclaimed: "Tell me thy name. . . . It seemeth to me that thou art none other than Rustum, the son of Zal." To which Rustum replied, "Thou errest; I am not Rustum, I am a slave, and own neither a crown nor a throne." He feared that Sohrab would quail before the adamant strength of his right arm, should he know of his real foe.

The clash of steel began: spear against spear; sword against sword. When their weapons were broken they fought with clubs. The coats of mail were wrenched from them. Their horses became exhausted. At last the combatants separated, neither party gaining the victory. Rustum had never met a foe so worthy of his valor. When they had rested they resumed the battle. They fought with arrows. Then Rustum sought to hurl Sohrab from his horse, but did not succeed. Again they seized their clubs. With one desperate blow Sohrab struck Rustum and, hurled from his steed, he staggered and fell. The day being far spent, the contestants parted for the night. A filial foreboding still haunted the mind of Sohrab. He put the urgent inquiry to Haman: "My mind is filled with thoughts of this aged man, mine adversary . . . my heart goeth out towards him, and I muse if it be not Rustum, my

father." But the black-hearted man said: "Oft have I looked upon the face of Rustum in battle. This man in no wise resembleth him." The eager-souled youth would not be satisfied, and ere the second day's strife began, he asked of Rustum, "Tell me thy name, neither hide it any longer, for I behold that thou art of noble blood." But Rustum, the terrible, replied, "O hero of tender age, we are not come to parley but to combat, and mine ears are sealed against thy words of lure." Then they closed in strife again. It lasted from morn till night. Finally Sohrab seized Rustum by the girdle and cast him to the ground and held him there beneath his knee. It was only by a bit of finesse to which Rustum resorted that his life was spared. He said: "It is written in the laws of honor that he who o'erthroweth a brave man for the first time should not destroy him, but preserve him for fight a second time; then only is it given unto him to kill his adversary." Sohrab stayed his hand and released his prisoner.

On the morrow, Rustum came to the scene of strife strengthened by a prayer offered to Ormuzd, his god. He was resistless in his might. The two champions once more joined battle. Rustum's desperate courage knew no defeat. He seized Sohrab with Titanic force, cast him to the earth and broke his back; then he drew his sword and was in the act of dealing the death blow, when Sohrab interposed. "I sped not forth for empty glory, but I went out to seek my father: for my mother had told me by what tokens I should know him, and I perish for longing after him. And now have my pains been fruitless, for it hath not been given me to look upon his face. . . . My father is Rustum, the

Pehliva, and it shall be told unto him how that Sohrab, his son, perished in the quest after his face." At this awful revelation Rustum's sword fell from his grasp, and he was smitten with horror. Then he asked for a token that Sohrab had spoken true words. So Sohrab bade him open his armor and see the jewel on his arm. Rustum obeyed, and when he saw the onyx, he was paralyzed with grief; he tore his garments and covered his head with ashes. Sohrab said, as he heard the moans of his stricken father: "It is in vain, there is no remedy. Weep not, therefore, for doubtless it was written that this should be."

Sohrab made a farewell request: "Let not the Shah fall upon the men of Turan, for they came not forth in enmity to him but to do my desire, . . . as for me, I came like the thunder and I vanish like the wind, but perchance it is given unto us to meet again above."

After the death of Sohrab, Rustum fell into chronic melancholy, repeating continually his sad lament, "I that am old have killed my son." Then he burned his tent, his throne, his trappings of war. At his command Sohrab's body was wrapped in costly robes and carried to Seistan. It was laid in a splendid sepulchre shaped like a horse's hoof and lined with gold. When the news of Sohrab's death reached Samengan, the king was overcome with distress. Tahmineh, in her unspeakable grief, commanded that her son's garments, his throne, his helmet, be brought to her, that she might sacredly preserve them. His gold and jewels she gave to the poor. Less than a year later she died of sorrow.

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM.

AN EPISODE.



AND the first gray of morning fill'd the east,
And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream.
But all the Tartar camp along the stream
Was hush'd, and still the men were plung'd in sleep ;
Sohrab alone, he slept not ; all night long 5
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed ;
But when the gray dawn stole into his tent,
He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,
And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,
And went abroad into the cold wet fog, 10
Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent.

Through the black Tartar tents he pass'd, which stood
Clustering like bee-hives on the low flat strand
Of Oxus, where the summer floods o'erflow
When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere ; 15
Through the black tents he pass'd, o'er that low strand,
And to a hillock came, a little back
From the stream's brink, the spot where first a boat,
Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.
The men of former times had crown'd the top 20
With a clay fort ; but that was fall'n, and now
The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,
A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread.
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood
Upon the thick pil'd carpets in the tent, 25

And found the old man sleeping on his bed
Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms.
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step
Was dull'd ; for he slept light, an old man's sleep ;
And he rose quickly on one arm, and said : — 30
“ Who art thou ? for it is not yet clear dawn.
Speak ! is there news, or any night alarm ? ”
But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said : —
“ Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa ! it is I.
The sun is not yet risen, and the foe 35
Sleep ; but I sleep not ; all night long I lie
Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee.
For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek
Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
In Samarcand, before the army march'd ; 40
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.
Thou know'st if, since from Ader-baijan first
I came among the 'Tartars and bore arms,
I have still serv'd Afrasiab well, and shown,
At my boy's years, the courage of a man. 45
This too thou know'st, that while I still bear on
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,
And beat the Persians back on every field,
I seek one man, one man, and one alone —
Rustum, my father ; who I hop'd should greet, 50
Should one day greet, upon some well-fought field
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.
So I long hop'd, but him I never find.
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.
Let the two armies rest to-day ; but I 55
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords
To meet me, man to man ; if I prevail,
Rustum will surely hear it ; if I fall —
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.
Dim is the rumor of a common fight, 60

Where host meets host, and many names are sunk :
But of a single combat fame speaks clear."

He spoke ; and Peran-Wisa took the hand
Of the young man in his, and sigh'd, and said : —

“O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine” 65

Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,
And share the battle's common chance with us
Who love thee, but must press forever first,

In single fight incurring single risk,
To find a father thou hast never seen ? 70

That were far best, my son, to stay with us
Unmurmuring ; in our tents, while it is war,
And when 'tis truce, then in Afrasiab's towns.

But, if this one desire indeed rules all,
To seek out Rustum — seek him not through fight ! 75

Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,
O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son !
But far hence seek him, for he is not here.

For now it is not as when I was young,
When Rustum was in front of every fray : 80

But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,
In Seistan, with Zal, his father old,
Whether that his own mighty strength at last
Feels the abhorr'd approaches of old age ;
Or in some quarrel with the Persian King. 85

There go ! — Thou wilt not ? Yet my heart forebodes
Danger or death awaits thee on this field.

Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost
To us ! fain therefore send thee hence, in peace
To seek thy father, not seek single fights 90
In vain ! — but who can keep the lion's cub
From ravening, and who govern Rustum's son ?
Go, I will grant thee what thy heart desires."

So said he, and dropp'd Sohrab's hand, and left
His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay ; 95

And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat
 He pass'd, and tied his sandals on his feet,
 And threw a white cloak round him, and he took
 In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword;
 And on his head he set his sheep-skin cap, 100
 Black, glossy, curl'd, the fleece of Kara-Kul;
 And rais'd the curtain of his tent, and call'd
 His herald to his side, and went abroad.

The sun by this had risen, and clear'd the fog
 From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands. 105
 And from their tents the Tartar horsemen fil'd
 Into the open plain; so Haman bade —
 Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa rul'd
 The host, and still was in his lusty prime. 109
 From their black tents, long files of horse, they stream'd;
 As when some gray November morn the files,
 In marching order spread, of long-neck'd cranes
 Stream over Casbin and the southern slopes
 Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,
 Or some froze Caspian reed-bed, southward bound 115
 For the warm Persian sea-board — so they stream'd.
 The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,
 First, with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears;
 Large men, large steeds; who from Bokhara come
 And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares. 120
 Next, the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south.
 The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,
 And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands;
 Light men and on light steeds, who only drink
 The acrid milk of camels, and their wells. 125
 And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came
 From far, and a more doubtful service own'd;
 The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks
 Of the Jaxartes. men with scanty beards
 And close-set skull-caps; and those wilder hordes 130

Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste,
 Kalmuks and unkempt Kuzzaks, tribes who stray
 Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,
 Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere —
 These all fil'd out from camp into the plain. 135
 And on the other side the Persians form'd; —
 First a light cloud of horse, 'Tartars they seem'd,
 The Ilyats of Khorassan; and behind,
 The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,
 Marshall'd battalions bright in burnish'd steel. 140
 But Peran-Wisa with his herald came,
 Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,
 And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks.
 And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw
 That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back, 145
 He took his spear, and to the front he came,
 And check'd his ranks, and fix'd them where they stood.
 And the old Tartar came upon the sand
 Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said: —
 "Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear! 150
 Let there be truce between the hosts to-day,
 But choose a champion from the Persian lords
 To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man."
 As, in the country, on a morn in June,
 When the dew glistens on the pearléd ears, 155
 A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy —
 So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,
 A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran
 Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they lov'd.
 But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool, 160
 Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,
 That vast sky-neighboring mountain of milk snow;
 Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they pass
 Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the snow,
 Chok'd by the air, and scarce can they themselves 165

Slake their parch'd throats with sugar'd mulberries —
 In single file they move, and stop their breath,
 For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging snows —
 So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.

And to Ferood his brother chiefs came up 170

To counsel; Gudurz and Zoarrah came,
 And Feraburz, who rul'd the Persian host
 Second, and was the uncle of the King;
 These came and counsell'd, and then Gudurz said: —

“Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up, 175

Yet champion have we none to match this youth.

He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.

But Rustum came last night; aloof he sits

And sullen, and has pitch'd his tents apart.

Him will I seek, and carry to his ear 180

The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name;

Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.

Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up.”

So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and cried: —

“Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said! 185

Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man.”

He spoke; and Peran-Wisa turn'd, and strode

Back through the opening squadrons to his tent.

But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,

And cross'd the camp which lay behind, and reach'd, 190

Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.

Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,

Just pitch'd; the high pavilion in the midst

Was Rustum's, and his men lay camp'd around.

And Gudurz enter'd Rustum's tent, and found 195

Rustum; his morning meal was done, but still

The table stood before him, charg'd with food;

A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,

And dark green melons; and there Rustum sat

Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist, 200

And play'd with it; but Gudurz came and stood
 Before him; and he look'd, and saw him stand,
 And with a cry sprang up and dropp'd the bird,
 And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said: —

“Welcome! these eyes could see no better sight. 205
 What news? but sit down first, and eat and drink.”

But Gudurz stood in the tent-door, and said: —
 “Not now! a time will come to eat and drink,
 But not to-day; to-day has other needs.
 The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze; 210
 For from the Tartars is a challenge brought
 To pick a champion from the Persian lords

To fight their champion — and thou know'st his name —
 Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.

O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's! 215
 He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart;
 And he is young, and Iran's chiefs are old,
 Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to thee.
 Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose!”

He spoke; but Rustum answer'd with a smile: — 220
 “Go to! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I
 Am older; if the young are weak, the King
 Errs strangely; for the King, for Kai Khosroo,
 Himself is young, and honors younger men,
 And lets the aged moulder to their graves. 225

Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young —
 The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I.
 For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?
 For would that I myself had such a son,
 And not that one slight helpless girl I have — 230

A son so fam'd, so brave, to send to war,
 And I to tarry with the snow-hair'd Zal,
 My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,
 And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,
 And he has none to guard his weak old age. 235

There would I go, and hang my armor up,
 And with my great name fence that weak old man,
 And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
 And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,
 And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings, 240
 And with these slaught'rous hands draw sword no more."

He spoke, and smil'd; and Gudurz made reply:—
 "What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,
 When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks
 Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks, 245
 Hidest thy face? Take heed lest men should say:
Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,
And shuns to peril it with younger men."

And, greatly mov'd, then Rustum made reply:—
 "O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words? 250
 Thou knowest better words than this to say.
 What is one more, one less, obscure or fam'd,
 Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?
 Are not they mortal, am not I myself?
 (But who for men of nought would do great deeds?) 255
 Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame!
 But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms;
 Let not men say of Rustum, he was match'd
 In single fight with any mortal man."

He spoke, and frown'd; and Gudurz turn'd, and ran 260
 Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy—
 Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.
 But Rustum strode to his tent door, and call'd
 His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,
 And clad himself in steel; the arms he chose 265
 Were plain, and on his shield was no device,
 Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,
 And from the fluted spine atop a plume
 Of horsehair wav'd, a scarlet horsehair plume.
 So arm'd, he issued forth; and Ruksh, his horse, 270

Follow'd him like a faithful hound at heel,
 Ruksh, whose renown was nois'd through all the earth,
 The horse, whom Rustum on a foray once
 Did in Bokhara by the river find
 A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home, 275
 And rear'd him; a bright bay, with lofty crest,
 Dight with a saddle-cloth of broider'd green
 Crusted with gold, and on the ground were work'd
 All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know.
 So follow'd, Rustum left his tents, and cross'd 280
 The camp, and to the Persian host appear'd.
 And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts
 Hail'd; but the Tartars knew not who he was.
 And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
 Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore, 285
 By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,
 Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,
 Having made up his tale of precious pearls,
 Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands —
 So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came. 290

And Rustum to the Persian front advanc'd,
 And Sohrab arm'd in Haman's tent, and came.
 And as afield the reapers cut a swath
 Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,
 And on each side are squares of standing corn, 295
 And in the midst a stubble, short and bare —
 So on each side were squares of men, with spears
 Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand.
 And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast
 His eyes toward the 'Tartar tents, and saw 300
 Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he came.

As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,
 Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge
 Who with numb blacken'd fingers makes her fire —
 At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn, 305

When the frost flowers the whiten'd window-panes —
 And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts
 Of that poor drudge may be; so Rustum eyed
 The unknown adventurous Youth, who from afar
 Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth 310
 All the most valiant chiefs; long he perus'd
 His spirited air, and wonder'd who he was.
 For very young he seem'd, tenderly rear'd;
 Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,
 Which in a queen's secluded garden throws 315
 Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,
 By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound —
 So slender Sohrab seem'd, so softly rear'd.
 And a deep pity enter'd Rustum's soul
 As he beheld him coming; and he stood, 320
 And beckon'd to him with his hand, and said: —

"O thou young man, the air of heaven is soft,
 And warm, and pleasant; but the grave is cold!
 Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.
 Behold me! I am vast, and clad in iron, 325
 And tried; and I have stood on many a field
 Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe —
 Never was that field lost, or that foe sav'd.
 O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?
 Be govern'd! quit the Tartar host, and come 330
 To Iran, and be as my son to me,
 And fight beneath my banner till I die!
 There are no youths in Iran brave as thou."

So he spake, mildly; Sohrab heard his voice,
 The mighty voice of Rustum, and he saw 335
 His giant figure planted on the sand,
 Sole, like some single tower, which a chief
 Hath builded on the waste in former years
 Against the robbers; and he saw that head,
 Streak'd with its first gray hairs; — hope fill'd his soul, 340

And he ran forward and embrac'd his knees,
And clasp'd his hand within his own, and said:—

“Oh, by thy father's head! by thine own soul!
Art thou not Rustum? speak: art thou not he?”

But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth, 345
And turn'd away, and spake to his own soul:—

“Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean!
False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.

For if I now confess this thing he asks,
And hide it not, but say: *Rustum is here!* 350

He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,
But he will find some pretext not to fight,
And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,
A belt of sword perhaps, and go his way.

And on a feast-tide, in Afrasiab's hall, 355
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry:

‘I challeng'd once, when the two armies camp'd
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords

To cope with me in single fight; but they
Shrank, only Rustum dar'd: then he and I 360

Chang'd gifts, and went on equal terms away.'
So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud;
Then were the chiefs of Iran sham'd through me.”

And then he turn'd, and sternly spake aloud:— 365
“Rise! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus

Of Rustum? I am here, whom thou hast call'd
By challenge forth; make good thy vaunt, or yield!

Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight?
Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee!

For well I know, that did great Rustum stand 370
Before thy face this day, and were reveal'd,

There would be then no talk of fighting more.
But being what I am, I tell thee this;

Do thou record it in thine inmost soul:
Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt and yield, 375

Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds
Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer-floods,
Oxus in summer, wash them all away."

He spoke; and Sohrab answer'd, on his feet:—
"Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so;
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.

Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand
Here on this field, there were no fighting then.
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.

Begin! thou art more vast, more dread than I,

And thou art prov'd, I know, and I am young—
But yet success sways with the breath of Heaven.

And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.

For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,

Pois'd on the top of a huge wave of fate,
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.

And whether it will heave us up to land,

Or whether it will roll us out to sea,
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,

We know not, and no search will make us know;
Only the event will teach us in its hour."

He spoke, and Rustum answer'd not, but hurl'd
His spear; down from the shoulder, down it came,
As on some partridge in the corn a hawk

That long has tower'd in the airy clouds
Drops like a plummet; Sohrab saw it come,

And sprang aside, quick as a flash; the spear
Hiss'd, and went quivering down into the sand,
Which it sent flying wide; then Sohrab threw

In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield; sharp rang,
The iron plates rang sharp, but turn'd the spear.

And Rustum seiz'd his club, which none but he
Could wield; an unlopp'd trunk it was, and huge,
Still rough—like those which men in treeless plains

To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,
 Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up
 By their dark springs, the wind in winter-time
 Hath made in Himalayan forests wrack,
 And strewn the channels with torn boughs — so huge 415
 The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck
 One stroke; but again Sohrab sprang aside,
 Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came
 Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand.
 And Rustum follow'd his own blow, and fell 420
 To his knees, and with his fingers clutch'd the sand;
 And now might Sohrab have unsheath'd his sword,
 And pierc'd the mighty Rustum while he lay
 Dizzy, and on his knees, and chok'd with sand:
 But he look'd on, and smil'd, nor bar'd his sword, 425
 But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said: —
 "Thou strik'st too hard! that club of thine will float
 Upon the summer-floods, and not my bones.
 But rise, and be not wroth! not wroth am I;
 No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul. 430
 Thou say'st, thou art not Rustum: be it so!
 Who art thou then, that canst so touch my soul?
 Boy as I am, I have seen battles too —
 Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,
 And heard their hollow roar of dying men; 435
 But never was my heart thus touch'd before.
 Are they from Heaven, these softenings of the heart?
 O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven!
 Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,
 And make a truce, and sit upon this sand, 440
 And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,
 And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.
 There are enough foes in the Persian host,
 Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang;
 Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou 445

Mayst fight; fight *them*, when they confront thy spear!
But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me!"

He ceas'd, but while he spake, Rustum had risen,
And stood erect, trembling with rage; his club
He left to lie, but had regain'd his spear, 450
Whose fiery point now in his mail'd right-hand
Blaz'd bright and baleful, like that autumn-star,
The baleful sign of fevers; dust had soil'd
His stately crest, and dimm'd his glittering arms.
His breast heav'd; his lips foam'd; and twice his voice 455
Was chok'd with rage; at last these words broke way: —

"Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands!
Curl'd minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words!
Fight; let me hear thy hateful voice no more.
Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now 460
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to dance;
But on the Oxus sands, and in the dance
Of battle, and with me, who make no play
Of war; I fight it out, and hand to hand.
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine! 465
Remember all thy valor; try thy feints
And cunning! all the pity I had is gone;
Because thou hast sham'd me before both the hosts
With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles."

He spoke, and Sohrab kindled at his taunts, 470
And he too drew his sword; at once they rush'd
Together, as two eagles on one prey
Come rushing down together from the clouds,
One from the east, one from the west; their shields
Dash'd with a clang together, and a din 475
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
Of hewing axes, crashing trees — such blows
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hail'd.
And you would say that sun and stars took part 480

In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud
Grew suddenly in heaven, and dark'd the sun
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,
And in a sandy whirlwind wrapp'd the pair. 485
In gloom they twain were wrapp'd, and they alone;
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes 490
And laboring breath; first Rustum struck the shield
Which Sohrab held stiff out; the steel-spik'd spear
Rent the tough plates, but fail'd to reach the skin,
And Rustum pluck'd it back with angry groan.
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm, 495
Nor clove its steel quite through; but all the crest
He shore away, and that proud horsehair plume,
Never till now defil'd, sank to the dust;
And Rustum bow'd his head; but then the gloom
Grew blacker, thunder rumbled in the air, 500
And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh, the horse,
Who stood at hand, utter'd a dreadful cry; —
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar
Of some pain'd desert-lion, who all day
Hath trail'd the hunter's javelin in his side, 505
And comes at night to die upon the sand —
The two hosts heard that cry, and quak'd for fear,
And Oxus curdled as it cross'd his stream.
But Sohrab heard, and quail'd not, but rush'd on,
And struck again; and again Rustum bow'd 510
His head; but this time all the blade, like glass,
Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,
And in the hand the hilt remain'd alone.
Then Rustum raised his head; his dreadful eyes
Glar'd, and he shook on high his menacing spear, 515

And shouted; *Rustum*! — Sohrab heard that shout,
And shrank amaz'd; back he recoil'd one step,
And scann'd with blinking eyes the advancing form;
And then he stood bewilder'd; and he dropp'd
His covering shield: and the spear pierc'd his side. 520
He reel'd, and staggering back, sank to the ground;
And then the gloom dispers'd, and the wind fell,
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all
The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair:
Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet, 525
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.

Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum began: —
“Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,
And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent; 530
Or else that the great Rustum would come down
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.
And then that all the Tartar host would praise
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame, 535
To glad thy father in his weak old age.
Fool, thou art slain, and by an unknown man!
Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old.”

And, with a fearless mien, Sohrab replied: — 540
“Unknown thou art; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain.
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man!
No! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.
For were I match'd with ten such men as thee,
And I were that which till to-day I was, 545
They should be lying here, I standing there.
But that belov'd name unnerv'd my arm —
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield
Fall; and thy spear transfix'd an unarm'd foe. 550

And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate,
 But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to hear :
 The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death,
 My father, whom I seek through all the world,
 He shall avenge my death, and punish thee." 555

As when some hunter in the spring hath found
 A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,
 Upon the craggy isle of a hill-lake,
 And pierc'd her with an arrow as she rose,
 And follow'd her to find her where she fell 560
 Far off; — anon her mate comes winging back
 From hunting, and a great way off describes
 His huddling young left sole; at that, he checks
 His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps
 Circles above his eyry, with loud screams 565
 Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she
 Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,
 In some far stony gorge out of his ken,
 A heap of fluttering feathers — never more
 Shall the lake glass her, flying over it; 570
 Never the black and dripping precipices
 Echo her stormy scream as she sails by —
 As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss,
 So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood
 Over his dying son, and knew him not. 575

And, with a cold, incredulous voice, he said : —
 "What prate is this of fathers and revenge ?
 The mighty Rustum never had a son."

And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied : —
 "Ah yes, he had ! and that lost son am I. 580
 Surely the news will one day reach his ear,
 Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,
 Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here;
 And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap
 To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee. 585

Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son
What will that grief, what will that vengeance be ?
Oh, could I live till I that grief had seen !
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells 590
With that old King, her father, who grows gray
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.
Her most I pity, who no more will see
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
With spoils and honor, when the war is done. 595
But a dark rumor will be bruited up,
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear ;
And then will that defenceless woman learn
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more ;
But that in battle with a nameless foe, 600
By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain."

He spoke ; and as he ceas'd, he wept aloud,
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.
He spoke ; but Rustum listen'd, plung'd in thought,
Nor did he yet believe it was his son 605
Who spoke, although he call'd back names he knew ;
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all —
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear 610
Rustum should seek the boy, to train in arms.
And so he deem'd that either Sohrab took,
By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son ;
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.
So deem'd he ; yet he listen'd, plung'd in thought ; 615
And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
Of the bright rocking ocean sets to shore
At the full moon ; tears gather'd in his eyes ;
For he remember'd his own early youth,
And all its bounding rapture ; as, at dawn, 620

The shepherd from his mountain-lodge describes
 A far, bright city, smitten by the sun,
 Through many rolling clouds — so Rustum saw
 His youth ; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom ;
 And that old King, her father, who lov'd well 625
 His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child
 With joy ; and all the pleasant life they led,
 They three, in that long-distant summer-time —
 The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
 And hound, and morn on those delightful hills 630
 In Ader-baijan. And he saw that youth,
 Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
 Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,
 Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe
 Of an unskilful gardener has been cut, 635
 Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
 And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
 On the mown, dying grass — so Sohrab lay,
 Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
 And Rustum gaz'd on him with grief, and said : — 640
 “ O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
 Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have lov'd.
 Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
 Have told thee false — thou art not Rustum's son,
 For Rustum had no son ; one child he had — 645
 But one — a girl ; who with her mother now
 Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us —
 Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war.”
 But Sohrab answer'd him in wrath ; for now
 The anguish of the deep-fix'd spear grew fierce, 650
 And he desired to draw forth the steel,
 And let the blood flow free, and so to die —
 But first he would convince his stubborn foe ;
 And, rising sternly on one arm, he said : —
 “ Man, who art thou who dost deny my words ? 655

Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,
And falsehood, while I liv'd, was far from mine.
I tell thee, prick'd upon this arm I bear
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,
That she might prick it on the babe she bore." 660

He spoke; and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks,
And his knees totter'd, and he smote his hand
Against his breast, his heavy-mail'd hand,
That the hard iron corslet clank'd aloud;
And to his heart he press'd the other hand, 665
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said:—

"Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie!
If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son."

Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loos'd
His belt, and near the shoulder bar'd his arm, 670
And show'd a sign in faint vermilion points
Prick'd; as a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
An emperor's gift — at early morn he paints,
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp 675
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands —
So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.
It was that griffin, which of old rear'd Zal,
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die, 680
A helpless babe, among the mountain-rocks;
Him that kind creature found, and rear'd, and lov'd —
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.

And Sohrab bar'd that image on his arm,
And himself scann'd it long with mournful eyes, 685
And then he touch'd it with his hand, and said:—

"How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?"

He spoke; but Rustum gaz'd, and gaz'd, and stood
Speechless; and then he utter'd one sharp cry: 690

"O boy—*thy father!*" and his voice chok'd there.
 And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,
 And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.
 But Sohrab crawl'd to where he lay, and cast
 His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips, 695
 And with fond faltering fingers strok'd his cheeks,
 Trying to call him back to life; and life
 Came back to Rustum; and he op'd his eyes,
 And they stood wide with horror; and he seiz'd
 In both his hands the dust which lay around, 700
 And threw it on his head, and smirch'd his hair,
 His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms;
 And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,
 And his sobs chok'd him; and he clutch'd his sword,
 To draw it, and forever let life out. 705
 But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,
 And with a soothing voice he spoke, and said:—
 "Father, forbear! for I but meet to-day
 The doom which at my birth was written down
 In Heaven; and thou art Heaven's unconscious hand. 710
 Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,—
 When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke too,
 I know it! but fate trod those promptings down
 Under its iron heel; fate, fate engag'd
 The strife, and hurl'd me on my father's spear. 715
 But let us speak no more of this! I find
 My father; let me feel that I have found!
 Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
 My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
 And wash them with thy tears, and say: *My son!* 720
 Quick! quick! for number'd are my sands of life,
 And swift; for like the lightning to this field
 I came, and like the wind I go away—
 Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind;
 But it was writ in Heaven that this should be." 725

So said he, and his voice releas'd the heart
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth ; he cast
His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,
And kiss'd him. And awe fell on both the hosts,
When they saw Rustum's grief ; and Ruksh, the horse, 730
With his head bowing to the ground, and mane
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe
First to the one, then to the other, mov'd
His head, as if inquiring what their grief
Might mean ; and from his dark, compassionate eyes, 735
The big warm tears roll'd down, and cak'd the sand.
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said : —

“Ruksh, now thou grievest ; but, O Ruksh, thy feet
Should then have rotted on their nimble joints,
When first they brought thy master to this field !” 740

But Sohrab look'd upon the horse and said : —
“Is this, then, Ruksh ? How often, in past days,
My mother told me of thee, thou braye steed,
My terrible father's terrible horse ! and said
That I should one day find thy lord and thee. 745
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane !
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I :
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
And snuff'd the breezes of my father's home.
And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan, 750
And seen the River of Helmund, and the Lake
Of Zirrah ; and the aged Zal himself
Has often strok'd thy neck, and given thee food,
Corn in a golden platter, soak'd with wine,
And said : *O Ruksh, bear Rustum well !* — but I 755
Have never known my grandsire's furrow'd face,
Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,
Nor slak'd my thirst at the clear Helmund stream ;
But lodg'd among my father's foes, and seen
Afrasiab's cities only : Samarcand, 760

Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,
 And the black Toorkmun tents; and only drunk
 The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,
 Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,
 The northern Sir; and this great Oxus stream, 765
 The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."

Then, with a heavy groan, Rustum bewail'd:—
 "Oh, that its waves were flowing over me!
 Oh, that I saw its grains of yellow silt
 Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!" 770

But, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied:—
 "Desire not that, my father! thou must live.
 For some are born to do great deeds, and live,
 As some are born to be obscur'd, and die.
 Do thou the deeds I die too young to do, 775
 And reap a second glory in thine age;
 Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.
 But come! thou seest this great host of men
 Which follow me; I pray thee, slay not these!
 Let me entreat for them; what have they done? 780
 They follow'd me, my hope, my fame, my star.
 Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
 But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,
 But carry me with thee to Seistan,
 And place me on a bed, and mourn for me; 785
 Thou, and the snow-hair'd Zal, and all thy friends.
 And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,
 And heap a stately mound above my bones,
 And plant a far-seen pillar over all,
 That so the passing horseman on the waste 790
 May see my tomb a great way off, and cry:
Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,
Whom his great father did in ignorance kill!
 And I be not forgotten in my grave."

And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied:— 795

“Fear not! as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,
So shall it be; for I will burn my tents,
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,
And carry thee away to Seistan,
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee, 800
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all,
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave. 805
And I will spare thy host; yea, let them go!
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
What should I do with slaying any more?
For would that all whom I have ever slain
Might be once more alive; my bitterest foes, 810
And they who were call'd champions in their time,
And through whose death I won that fame I have;
And I were nothing but a common man,
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown,
So thou mightest live too, my son, my son! 815
Or rather would that I, even I myself,
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,
Not thou of mine! and I might die, not thou;
And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan; 820
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine;
And say: *O son, I weep thee not too sore,
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end!*
But now in blood and battles was my youth,
And full of blood and battles is my age; 825
And I shall never end this life of blood.”

Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied: —
“A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man!
But thou shalt yet have peace; only not now,
Not yet! but thou shalt have it on that day, 830

When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,
Thou and the other peers of Kai Khosroo,
Returning home over the salt blue sea,
From laying thy dear master in his grave."

And Rustum gaz'd in Sohrab's face, and said : — 835
"Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea !
Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure."

He spoke ; and Sohrab smil'd on him, and took
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eas'd
His wound's imperious anguish ; but the blood 840
Came welling from the open gash, and life
Flow'd with the stream ; all down his cold white side
The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soil'd,
Like the soil'd tissue of white violets
Left, freshly gather'd, on their native bank, 845
By children whom their nurses call with haste
Indoors from the sun's eye ; his head droop'd low,
His limbs grew slack ; motionless, white, he lay,
White, with eyes clos'd ; only when heavy gasps,
Deep heavy gasps, quivering through all his frame, 850
Convuls'd him back to life, he open'd them,
And fix'd them feebly on his father's face ;
Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from his limbs
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansion which it left, 855
And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world.

So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead ;
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak
Down o'er his face, and sat by his dead son.
As those black granite pillars, once high-rear'd 860
By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear
His house, now 'mid their broken flights of steps
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side —
So, in the sand, lay Rustum by his son.

And night came down over the solemn waste, 865

And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,
And darken'd all ; and a cold fog, with night,
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,
As of a great assembly loos'd, and fires
Began to twinkle through the fog: for now 870
Both armies mov'd to camp, and took their meal ;
The Persians took it on the open sands
Southward, the Tartars by the river marge ;
And Rustum and his son were left alone.

But the majestic river floated on, 875
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there mov'd,
Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasmian waste,
Under the solitary moon ; he flow'd
Right for the polar star, past Orgunjè, 880
Brimming, and bright, and large ; then sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents, that for many a league
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles ; 885
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain-cradle in Pamere,
A foil'd circuitous wanderer — till at last
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright 890
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bath'd stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

STAGIRIUS.

THOU, who dost dwell alone :
Thou, who dost know thine own :
Thou, to whom all are known
From the cradle to the grave :

Save, oh ! save.

From the world's temptations,
From tribulations,
From that fierce anguish
Wherein we languish,
From that torpor deep
Wherein we lie asleep,
Heavy as death, cold as the grave,
Save, oh ! save.

When the soul, growing clearer,
Sees God no nearer ;
When the soul, mounting higher,
To God comes no nigher ;
But the arch-fiend Pride
Mounts at her side,
Foiling her high emprise,
Sealing her eagle eyes ;
And, when she fain would soar,
Makes idols to adore,
Changing the pure emotion
Of her high devotion,
To a skin-deep sense
Of her own eloquence ;
Strong to deceive, strong to enslave :
Save, oh ! save.

From the ingrain'd fashion
 Of this earthly nature
 That mars thy creature ;
 From grief that is but passion ;
 From mirth that is but feigning ;
 From tears that bring no healing ;
 From wild and weak complaining ;
 Thine old strength revealing,
 Save, oh ! save.

From doubt, where all is double ;
 Where wise men are not strong ;
 Where comfort turns to trouble ;
 Where just men suffer wrong ;
 Where sorrow treads on joy ;
 Where sweet things soonest cloy ;
 Where faiths are built on dust ;
 Where love is half mistrust,
 Hungry, and barren, and sharp as the sea :
 Oh ! set us free.

O let the false dream fly,
 Where our sick souls do lie
 Tossing continually !
 O where thy voice doth come
 Let all doubts be dumb,
 Let all words be mild,
 All strifes be reconcil'd,
 All pains beguiled :
 Light brings no blindness,
 Love no unkindness,
 Knowledge no ruin,
 Fear no undoing.
 From the cradle to the grave,
 Save, oh ! save.

TO A GYPSY CHILD BY THE SEA-SHORE.

DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN.

Who taught this pleading to unpractis'd eyes?
 Who hid such import in an infant's gloom?
 Who lent thee, child, this meditative guise?
 Who mass'd, round that slight brow, these clouds of doom?

Lo! sails that gleam a moment and are gone;
 The swinging waters, and the cluster'd pier.
 Not idly earth and ocean labor on,
 Nor idly do these sea-birds hover near.

But thou (whom superfluity of joy
 Wafts not from thine own thoughts, nor longings vain,
 Nor weariness, the full-fed soul's annoy),
 Remaining in thy hunger and thy pain;

Thou, drugging pain by patience; half averse
 From thine own mother's breast, that knows not thee;
 With eyes which sought thine eyes thou didst converse:
 And that soul-searching vision fell on me.

Glooms that go deep as thine I have not known:
 Moods of fantastic sadness, nothing worth.
 Thy sorrow and thy calmness are thine own:
 Glooms that enhance and glorify this earth.

What mood wears like complexion to thy woe?
 His, who in mountain glens, at noon of day,
 Sits rapt, and hears the battle break below? —
 Ah! thine was not the shelter, but the fray.

Some exile's, mindful how the past was glad ?
Some angel's, in an alien planet born ? —
No exile's dream was ever half so sad,
Nor any angel's sorrow so forlorn.

Is the calm thine of stoic souls, who weigh
Life well, and find it wanting, nor deplore,
But in disdainful silence turn'd away,
Stand mute, self-centr'd, stern, and dream no more ?

Or do I wait, to hear some gray-hair'd king
Unravel all his many-color'd lore ;
Whose mind hath known all arts of governing,
Mus'd much, lov'd life a little, loath'd it more ?

Down thy pale cheek long lines of shadow slope,
Which years, and curious thought, and suffering give.
Thou hast foreknown the vanity of hope,
Foreseen thy harvest ; yet proceed'st to live.

O meek anticipant of that sure pain
Whose sureness gray-hair'd scholars hardly learn !
What wonder shall time breed, to swell thy strain ?
What heavens, what earth, what sun shalt thou discern ?

Ere the long night, whose stillness brooks no star,
Match that funereal aspect with her pall,
I think, thou wilt have fathom'd life too far,
Have known too much ; or else forgotten all.

The Guide of our dark steps a triple veil
Betwixt our senses and our sorrow keeps ;
Hath sown with cloudless passages the tale
Of grief, and eas'd us with a thousand sleeps.

Ah! not the nectarous poppy lovers use,
 Not daily labor's dull Lethæan spring,
 Oblivion in lost angels can infuse
 Of the soil'd glory, and the trailing wing.

And though thou glean what strenuous gleaners may,
 In the throng'd fields where winning comes by strife;
 And though the just sun gild, as mortals pray,
 Some reaches of thy storm-vext stream of life;

Though that blank sunshine blind thee; though the cloud
 That sever'd the world's march and thine, be gone;
 Though ease dulls grace, and Wisdom be too proud
 To halve a lodging that was all her own;

Once, ere the day decline, thou shalt discern,
 Oh once, ere night, in thy success, thy chain!
 Ere the long evening close, thou shalt return,
 And wear this majesty of grief again.



THE STRAYED REVELLER.

THE PORTICO OF CIRCE'S PALACE. EVENING.

A YOUTH. CIRCE.

THE YOUTH.

FASTER, faster,
 O Circe, goddess,
 Let the wild, thronging train,
 The bright procession
 Of eddying forms,
 Sweep through my soul!

Thou standest, smiling
Down on me! thy right arm,
Lean'd up against the column there,
Props thy soft cheek;
Thy left holds, hanging loosely,
The deep cup, ivy-cinctur'd,
I held but now.

Is it, then, evening
So soon? I see the night-dews,
Cluster'd in thick beads, dim
The agate brooch-stones
On thy white shoulder;
The cool night-wind, too,
Blows through the portico,
Stirs thy hair, Goddess,
Waves thy white robe!

CIRCE.

Whence art thou, sleeper?

THE YOUTH.

When the white dawn first
Through the rough fir-planks
Of my hut, by the chestnuts,
Up at the valley-head,
Came breaking, Goddess!
I sprang up, I threw round me
My dappled fawn-skin;
Passing out, from the wet turf
Where they lay by the hut door,
I snatch'd up my vine-crown, my fir-staff,
All drench'd in dew;
Came swift down to join

The rout early gather'd
In the town, round the temple:
Iacchus' white fane
On yonder hill.

Quick I pass'd, following
The wood-cutters' cart-track
Down the dark valley. I saw
On my left, through the beeches,
Thy palace, Goddess,
Smokeless, empty !
Trembling, I enter'd ; beheld
The court all silent,
The lions sleeping ;
On the altar, this bowl.
I drank, Goddess !
And sank down here, sleeping,
On the steps of thy portico.

CIRCE.

Foolish boy ! Why tremblest thou ?
Thou lovest it, then, my wine ?
Wouldst more of it ? See, how glows
Through the delicate flush'd marble,
The red creaming liquor,
Strown with dark seeds !
Drink, then ! I chide thee not,
Deny thee not my bowl.
Come, stretch forth thy hand, then — so !
Drink : drink again !

THE YOUTH.

Thanks, gracious one ! —
Ah, the sweet fumes again !

More soft, ah me,
More subtle-winding
Than Pan's flute-music!
Faint — faint! Ah me,
Again the sweet sleep!

CIRCE.

Hist! Thou within there!
Come forth, Ulysses!
Art tired with hunting?
While we range the woodland,
See what the day brings.

ULYSSES.

Ever new magic!
Hast thou then lur'd hither,
Wonderful goddess, by thy art,
The young, languid-eyed Ampelus,
Iacchus' darling,
Or some youth belov'd of Pan,
Of Pan and the nymphs?
That he sits, bending downward
His white delicate neck
To the ivy-wreath'd marge
Of thy cup: the bright glancing vine-leaves
That crown his hair,
Falling forward, mingling
With the dark ivy-plants;
His fawn-skin, half untied,
Smear'd with red wine-stains? Who is he,
That he sits, overweigh'd
By fumes of wine and sleep,
So late, in thy portico?
What youth, goddess, what guest
Of gods or mortals?

CIRCE.

Hist! he wakes!
I lur'd him not hither, Ulysses.
Nay, ask him!

THE YOUTH.

Who speaks? Ah, who comes forth
To thy side, goddess, from within?
How shall I name him:
This spare, dark-featur'd,
Quick-eyed stranger?
Ah, and I see too
His sailor's bonnet,
His short coat, travel-tarnish'd,
With one arm bare!
Art thou not he, whom fame
This long time rumors
The favor'd guest of Circe, brought by the waves?
Art thou he, stranger?
The wise Ulysses,
Laertes' son?

ULYSSES.

I am Ulysses.
And thou, too, sleeper?
Thy voice is sweet.
It may be thou hast follow'd
Through the islands some divine bard,
By age taught many things,
Age and the Muses;
And heard him delighting
The chiefs and people
In the banquet, and learn'd his songs
Of gods and heroes,
Of war and arts,

And peopled cities,
Inland, or built
By the gray sea. — If so, then hail!
I honor and welcome thee.

THE YOUTH.

The gods are happy :
They turn on all sides
Their shining eyes,
And see below them
The earth and men.

They see Tiresias
Sitting, staff in hand,
On the warm, grassy
Asopus' bank,
His robe drawn over
His old sightless head,
Revolving inly
The doom of Thebes.
They see the centaurs
In the upper glens
Of Pelion, in the streams,
Where red-berried ashes fringe
The clear-brown shallow pools,
With streaming flanks, and heads
Rear'd proudly, snuffing
The mountain wind.

They see the Indian
Drifting, knife in hand,
His frail boat moor'd to . . .
A floating isle thick-matted
With large-leav'd, low-creeping melon-plants,
And the dark cucumber.

He reaps, and stows them,
Drifting, drifting; round him,
Round his green harvest-plot,
Flow the cool lake-waves:
The mountains ring them.

They see the Scythian
On the wide steppe, unharnessing
His wheel'd house at noon.
He tethers his beast down, and makes his meal:
Mares' milk, and bread
Bak'd on the embers. All around
The boundless waving grass-plains stretch, thick-
starr'd
With saffron and the yellow hollyhock,
And flag-leav'd iris flowers.
Sitting in his cart
He makes his meal: before him, for long miles,
Alive with bright green lizards,
And the springing bustard-fowl,
The track, a straight black line,
Furrows the rich soil; here and there
Clusters of lonely mounds
Topp'd with rough-hewn
Gray rain-blear'd statues, overpeer
The sunny waste.

They see the ferry
On the broad clay-laden
Lone Chorasmian stream: thereon,
With snort and strain,
Two horses, strongly swimming, tow
The ferry-boat, with woven ropes
To either bow
Firm harness'd by the mane; a chief,

With shout and shaken spear,
Stands at the prow, and guides them : but astern,
The cowering merchants, in long robes,
Sit pale beside their wealth
Of silk-bales and of balsam-drops,
Of gold and ivory,
Of turquoise-earth and amethyst,
Jasper and chalcedony,
And milk-barr'd onyx-stones.
The loaded boat swings groaning
In the yellow eddies :
The gods behold them.

They see the heroes
Sitting in the dark ship
On the foamless long-heaving
Violet sea,
At sunset nearing
The Happy Islands.
These things, Ulysses,
The wise bards also
Behold and sing :
But oh, what labor !
O prince, what pain !

They too can see
Tiresias ; but the gods
Who give them vision,
Added this law :
That they should bear too
His groping blindness,
His dark foreboding,
His scorn'd white hairs ;
Bear Hera's anger

Through a life lengthen'd
To seven ages.

They see the centaurs
On Pelion; then they feel,
They too, the maddening wine
Swell their large veins to bursting; in wild pain
They feel the biting spears
Of the grim Lapithæ, and Theseus, drive,
Drive crashing through their bones; they feel
High on a jutting rock in the red stream
Alcmena's dreadful son
Ply his bow! Such a price
The gods exact for song:
To become what we sing.

They see the Indian
On his mountain lake: but squalls
Make their skiff reel, and worms
In the unkind spring have gnawn
Their melon-harvest to the heart. They see
The Scythian; but long frosts
Parch them in winter-time on the bare steppe,
Till they too fade like grass: they crawl
Like shadows forth, in spring.

They see the merchants
On the Oxus stream: but care
Must visit first them too, and make them pale.
Whether, through whirling sand,
A cloud of desert robber-horse have burst
Upon their caravan; or greedy kings,
In the wall'd cities the way passes through,
Crush'd them with tolls; or fever-airs,

On some great river's marge,
Mown them down, far from home.

They see the heroes
Near harbor: but they share
Their lives, and former violent toil in Thebes,
Seven-gated Thebes, or Troy;
Or where the echoing oars
Of Argo first
Startled the unknown sea.

The old Silenus
Came, lolling in the sunshine,
From the dewy forest-coverts,
This way, at noon.
Sitting by me, while his fauns
Down at the water-side
Sprinkled and smooth'd
His drooping garland,
He told me these things.
But I, Ulysses,
Sitting on the warm steps,
Looking over the valley,
All day long, have seen,
Without pain, without labor,
Sometimes a wild-hair'd mænad,
Sometimes a faun with torches,
And sometimes, for a moment,
Passing through the dark stems,
Flowing-rob'd, the belov'd,
The desir'd, the divine
Belov'd Iacchus.

Ah, cool night-wind, tremulous stars!
Ah, glimmering water,

Fitful earth-murmur,
 Dreaming woods !
 Ah, golden-hair'd, strangely-smiling goddess,
 And thou, prov'd, much-enduring,
 Wave-toss'd wanderer !
 Who can stand still ?
 Ye fade, ye swim, ye waver before me. —
 The cup again !

Faster, faster,
 O Circe, goddess,
 Let the wild, thronging train,
 The bright procession
 Of eddying forms,
 Sweep through my soul !



PHILOMELA.

HARK ! ah, the nightingale —
 The tawny-throated !
 Hark ! from that moonlit cedar what a burst !
 What triumph ! hark ! — what pain !

O wanderer from a Grecian shore,
 Still, after many years, in distant lands,
 Still nourishing in thy bewilder'd brain
 That wild, unquench'd, deep-sunken, old-world pain,
 Say, will it never heal ?
 And can this fragrant lawn
 With its cool trees, and night,
 And the sweet, tranquil Thames,
 And moonshine, and the dew,
 To thy rack'd heart and brain
 Afford no balm ?

Dost thou to-night behold,
Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,
The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?
Dost thou again peruse
With hot cheeks and sear'd eyes
The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's shame?
Dost thou once more assay
Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor fugitive, the feathery change
Once more, and once more seem to make resound
With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?
Listen, Eugenia, —
How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!
Again — thou hearest?
Eternal passion!
Eternal pain!

DOVER BEACH.

THE sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; on the French coast, the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd sand,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in. V

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery ; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another ! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain ;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.



CONSOLATION.

Mist clogs the sunshine :
Smoky dwarf houses
Hem me round everywhere.
A vague dejection
Weighs down my soul.

Yet, while I languish,
Everywhere countless
Prospects unroll themselves,
And countless beings
Pass countless moods.

Far hence, in Asia,
On the smooth convent-roofs,
On the old terraces
Of holy Lassa,
Bright shines the sun.

Gray time-worn marbles
Hold the pure Muses:
In their cool gallery,
By yellow Tiber,
They still look fair.

Strange unlov'd uproar¹
Shrills round their portal;
Yet not on Helicon
Kept they more cloudless
Their noble calm.

Through sun-proof alleys
In a lone, sand-hemm'd
City of Africa,
A blind, led beggar,
Age-bow'd, asks alms.

No bolder robber
Erst abode ambush'd
Deep in the sandy waste;
No clearer eyesight
Spied prey afar.

¹ Written during the siege of Rome by the French.

Saharan sand-winds
Sear'd his keen eyeballs:
Spent is the spoil he won.
For him the present
Holds only pain.

Two young, fair lovers,
Where the warm June wind,
Fresh from the summer fields,
Play fondly round them,
Stand, tranc'd in joy.

With sweet, join'd voices,
And with eyes brimming:
"Ah," they cry, "Destiny,
Prolong the present!
Time, stand still here!"

The prompt stern goddess
Shakes her head, frowning;
Time gives his hourglass
Its due reversal:
Their hour is gone.

With weak indulgence
Did the just goddess
Lengthen their happiness,
She lengthen'd also
Distress elsewhere.

The hour, whose happy
Unalloy'd moments
I would eternalize,
Ten thousand mourners
Well-pleas'd, see end.

The bleak, stern hour,
Whose severe moments
I would annihilate,
Is pass'd by others
In warmth, light, joy.

Time, so complain'd of,
Who to no one man
Shows partiality,
Brings round to all men
Some undimm'd hours.



THE FORSAKEN MERMAN.

COME, dear children, let us away,
Down and away below !
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow,
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ, and chafe, and toss in the spray,
Children dear, let us away !
This way, this way !

Call her once before you go,
Call once yet !
In a voice that she will know :
"Margaret! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more !) to a mother's ear ;
Children's voices, wild with pain :
Surely she will come again !
Call her once and come away ;

This way, this way !
"Mother dear, we cannot stay ;
The wild white horses foam and fret."
Margaret ! Margaret !

Come, dear children, come away down ;
Call no more !
One last look at the white-wall'd town,
And the little gray church on the windy shore ;
Then come down !
She will not come though you call all day :
Come away, come away !

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay ?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell ?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep ;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, rang'd all around,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground ;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine ;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world forever and aye :
When did music come this way ?
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once !) that she went away ?

Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea ;
She said : " I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little gray church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world, ah me !
And I lose my poor soul, merman ! here with thee."
I said : " Go up, dear heart, through the waves :
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves ! "
She smil'd, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, were we long alone ?
The sea grows stormy ; the little ones moan :
" Long prayers," I said, " in the world they say ;
Come ! " I said ; and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town ;
Through the narrow pav'd streets, where all was still,
To the little gray church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold-blowing airs.
We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gaz'd up the aisle through the small leaded panes.
She sate by the pillar ; we saw her clear :
" Margaret, hist ! come quick, we are here !
Dear heart," I said, " we are long alone :
The sea grows stormy ; the little ones moan."
But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book.
Loud prays the priest ; shut stands the door.

Come away, children, call no more !
Come away, come down, call no more !

Down, down, down !
Down to the depths of the sea ! —
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings : “ O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy !
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well ;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun ! ”
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the shuttle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea ;
And her eyes are set in a stare :
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden ;
A long, long sigh
For the cold strange eyes of a little mermaiden,
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children ;
Come, children, come down ! —
The hoarse wind blows colder ;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door ;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.

We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing: "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she!
And alone dwell forever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks, we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hillside:
And then come back down,
Singing: "There dwells a lov'd one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely forever
The kings of the sea."

WORLDLY PLACE.

Even in a palace, life may be led well !
So spake the imperial sage, purest of men,
Marcus Aurelius. But the stifling den
Of common life, where, crowded up pell-mell,

Our freedom for a little bread we sell,
And drudge under some foolish master's ken,
Who rates us if we peer outside our pen ; —
Match'd with a palace, is not this a hell ?

Even in a palace ! On his truth sincere
Who spoke these words, no shadow ever came ;
And when my ill-school'd spirit is aflame

Some nobler, ampler stage of life to win,
I'll stop, and say : " There were no succor here !
The aids to noble life are all within."



SELF-DEPENDENCE.

WEARY of myself, and sick of asking
What I am, and what I ought to be,
At the vessel's prow I stand, which bears me
Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.

And a look of passionate desire
O'er the sea and to the stars I send :
" Ye who, from my childhood up, have calm'd me,
Calm me, ah, compose me to the end !

“Ah, once more,” I cried, “ye stars, ye waters,
On my heart your mighty charm renew :
Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,
Feel my soul becoming vast like you !”

From the intense clear star-sown vault of heaven,
Over the lit sea’s unquiet way,
In the rustling night-air came the answer :
“Wouldst thou *be* as these are ? *Live* as they.

“Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things without them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

“And with joy the stars perform their shining,
And the sea its long moon-silver’d roll ;
For self-pois’d they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul.

“Bounded by themselves, and unregardful
In what state God’s other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
These attain the mighty life you see.”

O air-born voice ! long since, severely clear,
A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear :
“Resolve to be thyself ; and know that he,
Who finds himself, loses his misery.”



ISOLATION. TO MARGUERITE.

WE were apart ! yet, day by day,
I bade my heart more constant be.
I bade it keep the world away,
And grow a home for only thee ;

Nor fear'd but thy love likewise grew,
Like mine, each day, more tried, more true.

The fault was grave! I might have known
What, far too soon, alas! I learn'd, —
The heart can bind itself alone,
And faith may oft be unreturn'd.
Self-sway'd our feelings ebb and swell.
Thou lov'st no more. Farewell! Farewell!

Farewell! — And thou, thou lonely heart,
Which never yet without remorse
Even for a moment didst depart
From thy remote and spheréd course
To haunt the place where passions reign, —
Back to thy solitude again!

Back! with the conscious thrill of shame
Which Luna felt, that summer-night,
Flash through her pure immortal frame,
When she forsook the starry height
To hang o'er Endymion's sleep
Upon the pine-grown Latmian steep.

Yet she, chaste queen, had never proved
How vain a thing is mortal love,
Wandering in heaven, far removed;
But thou hast long had place to prove
This truth, — to prove, and make thine own:
'Thou hast been, shalt be, art, alone.'

Or, if not quite alone, yet they
Which touch thee are unmating things, —
Ocean and clouds and night and day;
Lorn autumns and triumphant springs;

And life, and others' joy and pain,
And love, if love, of happier men.

Of happier men! — for they, at least,
Have *dream'd* two human hearts might blend
In one, and were through faith released
From isolation without end
Prolong'd; nor knew, although not less
Alone than thou, their loneliness.



TO MARGUERITE. (*Continued.*)

YES! in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless, watery wild,
We mortal millions live *alone*.
The islands feel the enclasping flow,
And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon their hollows lights,
And they are swept by balms of spring,
And in their glens, on starry nights,
The nightingales divinely sing;
And lovely notes, from shore to shore,
Across the sounds and channels pour, —

Oh! then a longing like despair
Is to their farthest caverns sent;
For surely once, they feel, we were
Parts of a single continent!
Now round us spreads the watery plain:
Oh, might our marges meet again!

Who order'd that their longing's fire
 Should be, as soon as kindled, cool'd ?
 Who renders vain their deep desire ? —
 A God, a God their severance rul'd !
 And bade betwixt their shores to be
 The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea.



MORALITY.

WE cannot kindle when we will
 The fire which in the heart resides ;
 The spirit bloweth and is still,
 In mystery our soul abides.
 But tasks in hours of insight will'd
 Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd.

With aching hands and bleeding feet
 We dig and heap, lay stone on stone ;
 We bear the burden and the heat
 Of the long day, and wish 'twere done.
 Not till the hours of light return,
 All we have built do we discern.

Then, when the clouds are off the soul,
 When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,
 Ask how *she* view'd thy self-control,
 Thy struggling, task'd morality —
 Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,
 Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

And she, whose censure thou dost dread,
 Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek,
 See, on her face a glow is spread,
 A strong emotion on her cheek !

"Ah, child!" she cries. "that strife divine,
Whence was it, for it is not mine?"

"There is no effort on *my* brow;
I do not strive, I do not weep:
I rush with the swift spheres, and glow
In joy, and when I will, I sleep.
Yet that severe, that earnest air,
I saw, I felt it once — but where?"

"I knew not yet the gauge of time,
Nor wore the manacles of space;
I felt it in some other clime,
I saw it in some other place.
'Twas when the heavenly house I trod,
And lay upon the breast of God."

A SUMMER NIGHT.

In the deserted, moon-blanch'd street,
How lonely rings the echo of my feet!
Those windows, which I gaze at, frown,
Silent and white, unopening down,
Repellent as the world; — but see!
A break between the housetops shows
The moon! and, lost behind her, fading dim
Into the dewy dark obscurity
Down at the far horizon's rim,
Doth a whole tract of heaven disclose!

And to my mind the thought
Is on a sudden brought
Of a past night, and a far different scene.

Headlands stood out into the moonlit deep
 As clearly as at noon ;
 The spring-tide's brimming flow
 Heaved dazzlingly between ;
 Houses, with long white sweep,
 Girdled the glistening bay ;
 Behind, through the soft air,
 The blue haze-cradled mountains spread away.
 That night was far more fair —
 But the same restless pacings to and fro,
 And the same vainly throbbing heart was there,
 And the same bright, calm moon.

> And the calm moonlight seems to say, —
*Hast thou, then, still the old unquiet breast,
 Which neither deadens into rest,
 Nor ever feels the fiery glow
 That whirls the spirit from itself away,
 But fluctuates to and fro,
 Never by passion quite possess'd,
 And never quite benumb'd by the world's sway?*
 And I, I know not if to pray
 Still to be what I am, or yield, and be
 Like all the other men I see.

For most men in a brazen prison live,
 Where, in the sun's hot eye,
 With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly
 Their lives to some unmeaning task-work give,
 Dreaming of naught beyond their prison wall.
 And as, year after year,
 Fresh products of their barren labor fall
 From their tired hands, and rest
 Never yet comes more near,
 Gloom settles slowly down over their breast.

And while they try to stem
The waves of mournful thought by which they are prest,
Death in their prison reaches them,
Unfreed, having seen nothing, still unblest.

And the rest, a few,
Escape their prison, and depart
On the wide ocean of life anew.
There the freed prisoner, where'er his heart
Listeth, will sail;
Nor doth he know how there prevail,
Despotic on that sea,
Trade-winds which cross it from eternity.
Awhile he holds some false way, undebarr'd
By thwarting signs, and braves
The freshening wind and blackening waves.
And then the tempest strikes him; and between
The lightning-bursts is seen
Only a driving wreck,
And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck
With anguish'd face and flying hair,
Grasping the rudder hard,
Still bent to make some port, he knows not where,
Still standing for some false, impossible shore.
And sterner comes the roar
Of sea and wind; and through the deepening gloom
Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman loom,
And he too disappears, and comes no more.

Is there no life, but these alone?
Madman or slave, must man be one?

Plainness and clearness without shadow of stain!
Clearness divine!
Ye heavens, whose pure dark regions have no sign

Of languor, though so calm, and though so great
 Are yet untroubled and unpassionate ;
 Who, though so noble, share in the world's toil,
 And, though so task'd, keep free from dust and soil !
 I will not say that your mild deeps retain
 A tinge, it may be, of their silent pain
 Who have long'd deeply once, and long'd in vain ;
 But I will rather say that you remain
 A world above man's head, to let him see
 How boundless might his soul's horizons be,
 How vast, yet of what clear transparency !
 How it were good to live there, and breathe free ;
 How fair a lot to fill
 Is left to each man still !



THE BURIED LIFE.

LIGHT flows our war of mocking words, and yet,
 Behold, with tears mine eyes are wet !
 I feel a nameless sadness o'er me roll.
 Yes, yes, we know that we can jest,
 We know, we know that we can smile !
 But there's a something in this breast
 To which thy light words bring no rest,
 And thy gay smiles no anodyne ;
 Give me thy hand, and hush awhile,
 And turn those limpid eyes on mine,
 And let me read there, love ! thy inmost soul.

Alas ! is even love too weak
 To unlock the heart, and let it speak ?
 Are even lovers powerless to reveal
 To one another what indeed they feel ?
 I knew the mass of men conceal'd

Their thoughts, for fear that if reveal'd
They would by other men be met
With blank indifference, or with blame reprov'd;
I knew they lived and moved
Trick'd in disguises, alien to the rest
Of men, and alien to themselves — and yet
The same heart beats in every human breast!

But we, my love! doth a like spell benumb
Our hearts, our voices? must we too be dumb?

Ah! well for us, if even we,
Even for a moment, can get free
Our heart, and have our lips unchain'd;
For that which seals them hath been deep-ordain'd!

Fate, which foresaw
How frivolous a baby man would be, —
By what distractions he would be possess'd,
How he would pour himself in every strife,
And wellnigh change his own identity, —
That it might keep from his capricious play
His genuine self, and force him to obey
Even in his own despite his being's law,
Bade through the deep recesses of our breast
The unregarded river of our life
Pursue with indiscernible flow its way;
And that we should not see
The buried stream, and seem to be
Eddying at large in blind uncertainty,
Though driving on with it eternally.

But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life;

A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
In tracking out our true, original course ;
A longing to inquire
Into the mystery of this heart which beats
So wild, so deep in us, — to know
Whence our lives come, and where they go.
And many a man in his own breast then delves,
But deep enough, alas ! none ever mines.
And we have been on many thousand lines,
And we have shown, on each, spirit and power ;
But hardly have we, for one little hour,
Been on our own line, have we been ourselves —
Hardly had skill to utter one of all
The nameless feelings that course through our breast,
But they course on forever unexpress'd.
And long we try in vain to speak and act
Our hidden self, and what we say and do
Is eloquent, is well — but 'tis not true !
And then we will no more be rack'd
With inward striving, and demand
Of all the thousand nothings of the hour
Their stupefying power ;
Ah yes, and they benumb us at our call !
Yet still, from time to time, vague and forlorn,
From the soul's subterranean depth upborne
As from an infinitely distant land,
Come airs, and floating echoes, and convey
A melancholy into all our day.

Only — but this is rare —
When a belovéd hand is laid in ours,
When, jaded with the rush and glare
Of the interminable hours,
Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
When our world-deafen'd ear

Is by the tones of a loved voice caress'd —
A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.
The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know.
A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
And hears its winding murmur, and he sees
The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze.

And there arrives a lull in the hot race
Wherein he doth forever chase
The flying and elusive shadow, rest.
An air of coolness plays upon his face,
And an unwonted calm pervades his breast;
And then he thinks he knows
The hills where his life rose,
And the sea where it goes.



LINES.

WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS.

In this lone open glade I lie,
Screen'd by deep boughs on either hand;
And at its end, to stay the eye,
Those black-crown'd, red-bol'd pine trees stand!

Birds here make song; each bird has his,
Across the girdling city's hum.
How green under the boughs it is!
How thick the tremulous sheep-cries come!

Sometimes a child will cross the glade
To take his nurse his broken toy ;
Sometimes a thrush flit overhead,
Deep in her unknown day's employ.

Here at my feet what wonders pass,
What endless, active life is here !
What blowing daisies, fragrant grass !
An air-stirr'd forest, fresh and clear.

Scarce fresher is the mountain sod
Where the tired angler lies stretch'd out,
And, eas'd of basket and of rod,
Counts his day's spoil, the spotted trout.

In the huge world which roars hard by,
Be others happy, if they can !
But in my helpless cradle I
Was breathed on by the rural Pan.

I, on men's impious uproar hurl'd,
Think often, as I hear them rave,
That peace has left the upper world,
And now keeps only in the grave.

Yet here is peace forever new !
When I who watch them am away,
Still all things in this glade go through
The changes of their quiet day.

Then to their happy rest they pass :
The flowers upclose, the birds are fed,
The night comes down upon the grass,
The child sleeps warmly in his bed.

Calm soul of all things ! make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,
That there abides a peace of thine,
Man did not make, and cannot mar.

The will to neither strive nor cry,
The power to feel with others give !
Calm, calm me more : nor let me die
Before I have begun to live.

THE YOUTH OF NATURE.

RAISED are the dripping oars,
Silent the boat ! The lake,
Lovely and soft as a dream,
Swims in the sheen of the moon.
The mountains stand at its head
Clear in the pure June night,
But the valleys are flooded with haze.
Rydal and Fairfield are there ;
In the shadow Wordsworth lies dead.
So it is, so it will be for aye.
Nature is fresh as of old,
Is lovely ; a mortal is dead.

The spots which recall him survive,
For he lent a new life to these hills.
The Pillar still broods o'er the fields
Which border Ennerdale Lake,
And Egremont sleeps by the sea.
The gleam of The Evening Star
Twinkles on Grasmere no more,
But ruin'd and solemn and gray
The sheepfold of Michael survives ;

And far to the south, the heath
Still blows in the Quantock coombs,
By the favorite waters of Ruth.
These survive! Yet not without pain,
Pain and dejection to-night,
Can I feel that their poet is gone.

He grew old in an age he condemn'd.
He look'd on the rushing decay
Of the times which had shelter'd his youth. —
Felt the dissolving throes
Of a social order he loved;
Outlived his brethren, his peers;
And, like the Theban seer,
Died in his enemies' day.

Cold bubbled the spring of Tilphusa,
Copais lay bright in the moon,
Helicon glass'd in the lake.
Its firs, and afar rose the peaks
Of Parnassus, snowily clear;
Thebes was behind him in flames,
And the clang of arms in his ear,
When his awe-struck captors led
The Theban seer to the spring.
Tiresias drank and died.
Nor did reviving Thebes
See such a prophet again.

Well may we mourn, when the head
Of a sacred poet lies low
In an age which can rear them no more!
The complaining millions of men
Darken in labor and pain;
But he was a priest to us all

Of the wonder and bloom of the world,
Which we saw with his eyes, and were glad.
He is dead, and the fruit-bearing day
Of his race is past on the earth ;
And darkness returns to our eyes.

For, oh ! is it you, is it you,
Moonlight, and shadow, and lake,
And mountains, that fill us with joy,
Or the poet who sings you so well ?
Is it you, O beauty, O grace,
O charm, O romance, that we feel,
Or the voice which reveals what you are ?
Are ye, like daylight and sun,
Shared and rejoiced in by all ?
Or are ye immersed in the mass
Of matter, and hard to extract,
Or sunk at the core of the world
Too deep for the most to discern ?
Like stars in the deep of the sky,
Which arise on the glass of the sage,
But are lost when their watcher is gone.

"They are here," — I heard, as men heard
In Mysian Ida the voice
Of the mighty Mother, or Crete,
The murmur of Nature, reply, —
"Loveliness, magic, and grace,
They are here ! they are set in the world,
They abide ! and the finest of souls
Hath not been thrill'd by them all,
Nor the dullest been dead to them quite.
The poet who sings them may die,

But they are immortal and live,
For they are the life of the world.
Will ye not learn it, and know,
When ye mourn that a poet is dead,
That the singer was less than his themes,
Life, and emotion, and I ?

More than the singer are these.
Weak is the tremor of pain
That thrills in his mournfullest chord
To that which once ran through his soul.
Cold the elation of joy
In his gladdest, airiest song,
To that which of old in his youth
Fill'd him and made him divine.
Hardly his voice at its best
Gives us a sense of the awe,
The vastness, the grandeur, the gloom,
Of the unlit gulf of himself.

Ye know not yourselves ; and your bards —
The clearest, the best, who have read
Most in themselves — have beheld
Less than they left unreveal'd.
Ye express not yourselves : can ye make
With marble, with color, with word,
What charm'd you in others re-live ?
Can thy pencil, O artist ! restore
The figure, the bloom of thy love,
As she was in her morning of spring ?
Canst thou paint the ineffable smile
Of her eyes as they rested on thine ?
Can the image of life have the glow,
The motion of life itself ?

Yourselves and your fellows ye know not ; and me,
The mateless, the one, will ye know ?
Will ye scan me, and read me, and tell
Of the thoughts that ferment in my breast,
My longing, my sadness, my joy ?
Will ye claim for your great ones the gift
To have render'd the gleam of my skies,
To have echoed the moan of my seas,
Utter'd the voice of my hills ?
When your great ones depart, will ye say, —
All things have suffer'd a loss,
Nature is hid in their grave ?

Race after race, man after man,
Have thought that my secret was theirs,
Have dream'd that I lived but for them,
That they were my glory and joy.
— They are dust, they are changed, they are gone !
“ I remain.”

CALAIS SANDS.

A THOUSAND knights have rein'd their steeds
To watch this line of sand-hills run,
Along the never-silent strait,
To Calais glittering in the sun ;

To look toward Ardres' Golden Field
Across this wide aerial plain,
Which glows as if the Middle Age
Were gorgeous upon earth again.

Oh, that to share this famous scene,
I saw, upon the open sand,
Thy lovely presence at my side, —
Thy shawl, thy look, thy smile, thy hand !

How exquisite thy voice would come,
My darling, on this lonely air!
How sweetly would the fresh sea-breeze
Shake loose some band of soft brown hair!

Yet now my glance but once hath roved
O'er Calais and its famous plain;
To England's cliffs my gaze is turn'd,
O'er the blue strait mine eyes I strain.

Thou comest! Yes! the vessel's cloud
Hangs dark upon the rolling sea.
Oh that yon sea-bird's wings were mine,
To win one instant's glimpse of thee!

I must not spring to grasp thy hand,
To woo thy smile, to seek thine eye;
But I may stand far off, and gaze,
And watch thee pass unconscious by,—

And spell thy looks, and guess thy thoughts,
Mixt with the idlers on the pier—
Ah! might I always rest unseen,
So I might have thee always near!

To-morrow hurry through the fields
Of Flanders to the storied Rhine!
To-night those soft-fringed eyes shall close
Beneath one roof, my queen! with mine.



THE LAST WORD.

CREEP into thy narrow bed,
Creep, and let no more be said.
Vain thy onset: all stands fast.
Thou thyself must break at last.

Let the long contention cease !
Geese are swans, and swans are geese
Let them have it how they will !
Thou art tired : best be still.

They out-talk'd thee, hiss'd thee, tore thee ?
Better men fared thus before thee ;
Fired their ringing shot, and pass'd ;
Hotly charg'd, and sank at last.

Charge once more, then, and be dumb !
Let the victors, when they come,
When the forts of folly fall,
Find thy body by the wall.



A WISH.

I ASK not that my bed of death
From bands of greedy heirs be free ;
For these besiege the latest breath
Of fortune's favor'd sons, not me.

I ask not each kind soul to keep
Tearless, when of my death he hears.
Let those who will, if any, weep !
There are worse plagues on earth than tears.

I ask but that my death may find
The freedom to my life denied ;
Ask but the folly of mankind
Then, then at last, to quit my side.

Spare me the whispering, crowded room,
The friends who come, and gape, and go;
The ceremonious air of gloom —
All which makes death a hideous show!

Nor bring, to see me cease to live,
Some doctor full of phrase and fame,
To shake his sapient head, and give
The ill he cannot cure a name.

Nor fetch, to take the accustom'd toll
Of the poor sinner bound for death,
His brother-doctor of the soul,
To canvass with official breath

The future and its viewless things, —
That undiscover'd mystery
Which one who feels death's winnowing wings
Must needs read clearer, sure, than he!

Bring none of these; but let me be,
While all around in silence lies,
Moved to the window near, and see
Once more, before my dying eyes, —

Bathed in the sacred dews of morn
The wide aerial landscape spread, —
The world which was ere I was born,
The world which lasts when I am dead;

Which never was the friend of *one*,
Nor promised love it could not give,
But lit for all its generous sun,
And lived itself, and made us live.

There let me gaze, till I become
 In soul, with what I gaze on, wed!
 To feel the universe my home;
 To have before my mind — instead

Of the sick-room, the mortal strife,
 The turmoil for a little breath —
 The pure eternal course of life,
 Not human combatings with death!

Thus feeling, gazing, might I grow
 Compos'd, refresh'd, ennobl'd, clear;
 Then willing let my spirit go
 To work or wait elsewhere or here!



THE SCHOLAR-GYPSY.

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill:
 Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes!
 No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
 Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
 Nor the cropp'd herbage shoot another head.
 But when the fields are still,
 And the tir'd men and dogs all gone to rest,
 And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
 Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd green,
 Come, shepherd; and again begin the quest!

Here, where the reaper was at work of late,
 In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
 His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,
 And in the sun, all morning, binds the sheaves,
 Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use;—
 Here will I sit and wait,

While to my ear from uplands far away
 The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
 With distant cries of reapers in the corn:
 All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screen'd is this nook, o'er the high half-reap'd field,
 And here till sundown, shepherd! will I be.
 Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
 And round green roots and yellowing stalks, I see
 Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep;
 And air-swept lindens yield
 Their scent, and rustle down their perfum'd showers
 Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
 And bower me from the August sun with shade;
 And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book.
 Come, let me read the oft-read tale again!
 The story of the Oxford scholar poor,
 Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,
 Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,
 One summer morn forsook
 His friends, and went to learn the gypsy lore,
 And roam'd the world with that wild brotherhood,
 And came, as most men deem'd, to little good;
 But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But once, years after, in the country lanes,
 Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,
 Met him, and of his way of life inquir'd;
 Whereat he answer'd that the gypsy crew,
 His mates, had arts to rule as they desir'd
 The workings of men's brains,

And they can bind them to what thoughts they will.

“And I,” he said, “the secret of their art,

When fully learn’d, will to the world impart:

But it needs Heaven-sent moments for this skill.”

This said, he left them, and return’d no more,

But rumors hung about the country side,

That the lost scholar long was seen to stray,

Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,

In hat of antique shape, and cloak of gray,

The same the gypsies wore.

Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring;

At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,

On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frock’d boors

Had found him seated at their entering;

But, ’mid their drink and clatter, he would fly. —

And I myself seem half to know thy looks,

And put the shepherds, wanderer! on thy trace;

And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks,

I ask if thou hast pass’d their quiet place;

Or in my boat I lie

Moor’d to the cool bank in the summer-heats,

’Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,

And watch the warm, green-muffl’d Cumner hills,

And wonder if thou haunt’st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov’st retired ground:

Thee, at the ferry, Oxford riders blithe,

Returning home on summer-nights, have met

Crossing the stripling Thames at Bablockhithe,

Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,

As the punt’s rope chops round;

And leaning backward in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Pluck'd in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers;
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream.

And then they land, and thou art seen no more!—
Maidens who from the distant hamlets come
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
Or cross a stile into the public way.
Oft thou hast given them store
Of flowers: the frail-leaf'd white anemone,
Dark bluebells drench'd with dew of summer eves,
And purple orchises with spotted leaves;
But none hath words can she report of thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,
Men, who through those wide fields of breezy grass
Where black-wing'd swallows haunt the glittering
Thames,
To bathe in the abandon'd lasher pass,
Have often pass'd thee near,
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown;
Mark'd thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air:
But, when they came from bathing, thou wast gone!

At some lone homestead in the Cunner hills,
Where at her open door the housewife darns,
Thou hast been seen; or hanging on a gate,
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.
Children, who early range these slopes, and late,
For cresses from the rills,

Have known thee eying, all an April day,
The springing pastures and the feeding kine;
And mark'd thee, when the stars come out and shine,
Through the long dewy grass move slow away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood,
(Where most the gypsies by the turf-edg'd way
Pitch their smok'd tents, and every bush you see
With scarlet patches tagg'd, and shreds of gray,
Above the forest-ground called Thessaly,)
The blackbird, picking food,
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all:
So often has he known thee past him stray
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a wither'd spray,
And waiting for the spark from Heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill,
Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers go,
Have I not pass'd thee on the wooden bridge,
Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
Thy face toward Hinksey and its wintry ridge?
And thou hast climb'd the hill,
And gain'd the white brow of the Cumner range;
Turn'd once to watch, while thick the snowflakes fall,
The line of festal light in Christ-Church hall;
Then sought thy straw in some sequester'd grange.

But what—I dream! Two hundred years are flown,
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe
That thou wert wander'd from the studious walls
To learn strange arts, and join a gypsy-tribe;
And thou from earth art gone

Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid :
Some country nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,
Under a dark red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours !
For what wears out the life of mortal men ?
'Tis that from change to change their being rolls ;
'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls,
And numb the elastic powers.
Till, having us'd our nerves with bliss and teen,
And tir'd upon a thousand schemes our wit,
To the just-pausing Genius we remit
Our worn-out life, and are — what we have been.

Thou hast not liv'd, why shouldst thou perish, so ?
Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire :
Else wert thou long since number'd with the dead,
Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire !
The generations of thy peers are fled,
And we ourselves shall go ;
But thou possessest an immortal lot,
And we imagine thee exempt from age
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,
Because thou hadst what we, alas ! have not.

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things ;
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings.
O life unlike to ours !

Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half lives a hundred different lives;
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.

Thou waitest for the spark from Heaven! and we,
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly will'd,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Whose vague resolves never have been fulfill'd;
For whom each year we see
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new;
Who hesitate and falter life away,
And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day:
Ah! do not we, wanderer! await it too?

Yes, we await it! but it still delays,
And then we suffer: and amongst us, one
Who most has suffer'd, takes dejectedly
His seat upon the intellectual throne;
And all his store of sad experience he
Lays bare of wretched days;
Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,
And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
And how the breast was sooth'd, and how the head,
And all his hourly varied anodynes.

This for our wisest! and we others pine,
And wish the long unhappy dream would end,
And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear,
With close-lipp'd patience for our only friend:
Sad patience, too near neighbor to despair.
But none has hope like thine!

Thou through the fields and through the woods dost stray,
Roaming the country side, a truant boy,
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
And every doubt long blown by time away.

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames,
Before this strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads o'ertax'd, its palsied hearts, was rife!
Fly hence, our contact fear!

Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood!
Averse, as Dido did, with gesture stern,
From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
Wave us away; and keep thy solitude!

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free onward impulse brushing through,
By night, the silver'd branches of the glade,
Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge; and resting on the moonlit pales,
Freshen thy flowers, as in former years,
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales!

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
For strong the infection of our mental strife,
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest;
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,

Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfix'd thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made;
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade:
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles:
As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-hair'd creepers stealthily,
The fringes of a southward-facing brow
Among the Ægean isles;
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
Freighted with amber grapes and Chian wine,
Green bursting figs, and tunnies steep'd in brine,
And knew the intruders on his ancient home,

The young light-hearted masters of the waves;
And snatch'd his rudder, and shook out more sail;
And day and night held on indignantly
O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
To where the Atlantic raves
Outside the western straits; and unbent sails
There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of
foam,
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;
And on the beach undid his corded bales.

THYRSIS.

A MONODY, TO COMMEMORATE THE AUTHOR'S FRIEND,
ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH, WHO DIED AT FLORENCE,
1861.

How chang'd is here each spot man makes or fills!
In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same;
The village street its haunted mansion lacks,
And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,
And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks.
Are ye too chang'd, ye hills?
See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
To-night from Oxford up your pathway strays!
Here came I often, often, in old days,
Thyrsis and I: we still had Thyrsis then.

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,
Past the high wood, to where the elm tree crowns
The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?
The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful Thames!—
This winter eve is warm,
Humid the air! leafless, yet soft as spring,
The tender purple spray on copse and briers.
And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,
She needs not June for beauty's heightening:

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night!
Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
Befalls me wandering through this upland dim.
Once pass'd I blindfold here, at any hour;
Now seldom come I, since I came with him.
That single elm tree bright

Against the west — I miss it! is it gone?
We priz'd it dearly : while it stood, we said,
Our friend, the Gypsy-Scholar, was not dead;
While the tree liv'd, he in these fields liv'd on.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,
But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick;
And with the country-folk acquaintance made
By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick.
Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first assay'd.
Ah me! this many a year
My pipe is lost, my shepherd's holiday!
Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart
Into the world and wave of men depart;
But Thyrsis of his own will went away.

It irk'd him to be here; he could not rest.
He lov'd each simple joy the country yields,
He lov'd his mates; but yet he could not keep,
For that a shadow lour'd on the fields,
Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep.
Some life of men unblest
He knew, which made him droop, and fill'd his head.
He went; his piping took a troubled sound
Of storms that rage outside our happy ground;
He could not wait their passing, he is dead.

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er;
Before the roses and the longest day,
When garden walks, and all the grassy floor,
With blossoms red and white of fallen May
And chestnut flowers, are strewn,

So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vext garden-trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high midsummer pomps come on,
Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-William with his homely cottage smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow;
Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening star.

He hearkens not: light comer, he is flown!
What matters it? next year he will return,
And we shall have him in the sweet spring days,
With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
And bluebells trembling by the forest ways,
And scent of hay new-mown.
But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see;
See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,
And blow a strain the world at last shall heed:
For Time, not Corydon, hath conquer'd thee!

Alack, for Corydon no rival now!
But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
Some good survivor with his flute would go,
Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate;
And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
And relax Pluto's brow,

And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
Of Proserpine, among whose crowned hair
Are flowers first open'd on Sicilian air;
And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead.

O easy access to the hearer's grace
When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!
For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
Each rose with blushing face;
She lov'd the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.
But ah, of our poor Thames she never heard!
Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirr'd;
And we should tease her with our plaint in vain.

Well! wind-dispers'd and vain the words will be:
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd hill!
Who, if not I, for questing here hath power?
I know the wood which hides the daffodil,
I know the Fyfield tree,
I know what white, what purple fritillaries
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields,
And what sedg'd brooks are Thames's tributaries;

I know these slopes; who knows them if not I?
But many a dingle on the lov'd hill-side,
With thorns once studded, old white-blossom'd trees,
Where thick the cowslips grew, and far-descried
High tower'd the spikes of purple orchises,
Hath since our day put by

The coronals of that forgotten time ;
 Down each green bank hath gone the plough-boy's team,
 And only in the hidden brookside gleam
 Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

Where is the girl, who by the boatman's door,
 Above the locks, above the boating throng,
 Unmoor'd our skiff when through the Wytham flats,
 Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among,
 And darting swallows and light water-gnats,
 We track'd the shy Thames shore ?
 Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell
 Of our boat passing heav'd the river-grass,
 Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass ? —
 They all are gone, and thou art gone as well !

Yes, thou art gone ! and round me, too, the night
 In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
 I see her veil draw soft across the day,
 I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
 The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent with gray ;
 I feel her finger light
 Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train :
 The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
 The heart less bounding at emotion new,
 And hope, once crush'd, less quick to spring again.

And long the way appears, which seem'd so short
 To the less practis'd eye of sanguine youth ;
 And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,
 The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth,
 Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and bare !
 Unbreachable the fort

Of the long-batter'd world uplifts its wall ;
And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows,
And near and real the charm of thy repose ;
And night as welcome as a friend would fall.

But hush ! the upland hath a sudden loss
Of quiet. — Look, adown the dusk hillside,
A troop of Oxford hunters going home,
As in old days, jovial and talking, ride !
From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they come.
Quick ! let me fly, and cross
Into yon farther field. 'Tis done : and see,
Back'd by the sunset, which doth glorify
The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree ! the Tree !

I take the omen ! Eve lets down her veil,
The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,
The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,
And in the scatter'd farms the lights come out.
I cannot reach the signal tree to-night,
Yet, happy omen, hail !
Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale,
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
The morningless and unawakening sleep,
Under the flowery oleanders pale),

Hear it, O Thyrsis : still our tree is there ! —
Ah, vain ! These English fields, this upland dim,
These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,
That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him.
To a boon southern country he is fled :
And now in happier air,

Wandering with the great Mother's train divine,
 (And purer or more subtle soul than thee,
 I trow, the mighty Mother doth not see),
 Within a folding of the Apennine,

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old !
 Putting his sickle to the perilous grain
 In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,
 For thee the Lityerses-song again
 Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing ;
 Sings his Sicilian fold,
 His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes ;
 And how a call celestial round him rang,
 And heavenward from the fountain-brink he sprang ;
 And all the marvel of the golden skies.

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
 Sole in these fields ! yet will I not despair :
 Despair I will not, while I yet descry
 'Neath the mild canopy of English air
 That lonely tree against the western sky.
 Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,
 Our Gypsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee !
 Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
 Woods with anemones in flower till May,
 Know him a wanderer still : then why not me ?

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
 Shy to illumine ; and I seek it, too.
 This does not come with houses or with gold,
 With place, with honor, and a flattering crew ;
 'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold :
 But the smooth-slipping weeks

Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
He wends unfollow'd; he must house alone;
Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspir'd.

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound:
Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour!
Men gave thee nothing; but this happy quest,
If men esteem'd thee feeble, gave thee power,
If men procur'd thee trouble, gave thee rest.
And this rude Cumner ground,
Its fir-topp'd Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,
Here can'st thou in thy jocund youthful time;
Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime!
And still the haunt below'd a virtue yields.

What though the music of thy rustic flute
Keep not for long its happy, country tone;
Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
Which task'd thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat—
It fail'd, and thou wast mute!
Yet hadst thou always visions of our light,
And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,
And soon thy foot resum'd its wandering way,
Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!
'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
Thyrsis! in reach of sheep-bells, is my home.
Then through the great town's harsh, heartwearying roar,
Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
To chase fatigue and fear:

*Why faintest thou ? I wander'd till I died.
 Roam on ! The light we sought is shining still.
 Dost thou ask proof ? Our Tree yet crowns the hill,
 Our Scholar travels yet the lov'd hill-side.*

RUGBY CHAPEL.

NOVEMBER, 1857.

COLDLY, sadly descends
 The autumn evening. The field
 Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
 Of wither'd leaves, and the elms,
 Fade into dimness apace,
 Silent; hardly a shout
 From a few boys late at their play !
 The lights come out in the street,
 In the schoolroom windows — but cold,
 Solemn, unlighted, austere,
 Through the gathering darkness, arise
 The chapel-walls, in whose bound
 Thou, my father ! art laid.

There thou dost lie, in the gloom
 Of the autumn evening. But ah !
 That word, *gloom*, to my mind
 Brings thee back in the light
 Of thy radiant vigor again.
 In the gloom of November we pass'd
 Days not dark at thy side ;
 Seasons impair'd not the ray
 Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.

Such thou wast! and I stand
In the autumn evening, and think
Of bygone autumns with thee.

Fifteen years have gone round
Since thou arodest to tread,
In the summer-morning, the road
Of death, at a call unforeseen,
Sudden. For fifteen years,
We who till then in thy shade
Restored as under the boughs
Of a mighty oak, have endured
Sunshine and rain as we might,
Bare, unshaded, alone,
Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labor-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past,
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live —
Prompt, unwearied, as here!
Still thou upraisest with zeal
The humble good from the ground,
Sternly represses the bad!
Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
Those who with half-open eyes

Tread the border-land dim
'Twixt vice and virtue ; reviv'st,
Succorest ! — This was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth ?
Most men eddy about
Here and there — eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurled in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing ; and then they die —
Perish — and no one asks
Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves,
In the moonlit solitudes mild
Of the midmost ocean, have swelled,
Foamed for a moment, and gone.

And there are some, whom a thirst
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
Not with the crowd to be spent,
Not without aim to go round
In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain.
Ah yes ! some of us strive
Not without action to die
Fruitless, but something to snatch
From dull oblivion, nor all
Glut the devouring grave.
We, we have chosen our path —
Path to a clear-purposed goal,
Path of advance ! — but it leads

A long, steep journey, through sunk
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.
Cheerful, with friends, we set forth —
Then, on the height, comes the storm.
Thunder crashes from rock
To rock, the cataracts reply ;
Lightnings dazzle our eyes ;
Roaring torrents have breached
The track, the stream-bed descends
In the place where the wayfarer once
Planted his footstep — the spray
Boils o'er its borders ! aloft
The unseen snow-beds dislodge
Their hanging ruin ! — Alas ;
Havoc is made in our train !
Friends, who set forth at our side
Falter, are lost in the storm.

We, we only are left —
With frowning foreheads, with lips
Sternly compressed, we strain on,
On — and at nightfall at last
Come to the end of our way,
To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks ;
Where the gaunt and taciturn host
Stands on the threshold, the wind
Shaking his thin white hairs
Holds his lantern to scan
Our storm-beat figures, and asks
Whom in our party we bring ?
Whom we have left in the snow ?

Sadly we answer, We bring
Only ourselves ! we lost
Sight of the rest in the storm.

Hardly ourselves we fought through,
Stripp'd, without friends, as we are.
Friends, companions, and train,
The avalanche swept from our side.

But thou wouldst not *alone*
Be saved, my father! *alone*
Conquer and come to thy goal,
Leaving the rest in the wild.
We were weary, and we
Fearful, and we in our march,
Fain to drop down and to die.
Still thou turnedst, and still
Beckonedst the trembler, and still
Gavest the weary thy hand.
If, in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet,
Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing — to us thou wast still
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself;
And, at the end of thy day,
O faithful shepherd! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

And through thee I believe
In the noble and great who are gone;
Pure souls honor'd and blest
By former ages, who else —
Such, so soulless, so poor,
Is the race of men whom I see —
Seem'd but a dream of the heart,
Seem'd but a cry of desire.

Yes! I believe that there lived
Others like thee in the past,
Not like the men of the crowd
Who all round me to-day
Bluster or cringe, and make life
Hideous and arid and vile;
But souls temper'd with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God! — or sons
Shall I not call you? because
Not as servants ye knew
Your Father's innermost mind,
His, who unwillingly sees
One of his little ones lost —
Yours is the praise, if mankind
Hath not as yet in its march
Fainted, and fallen, and died!

See! In the rocks of the world
Marches the host of mankind,
A feeble, wavering line.
Where are they tending? A God
Marshall'd them, gave them their goal. —
Ah, but the way is so long!

Years they have been in the wild!
Sore thirst plagues them, the rocks,
Rising all round, overawe;
Factions divide them, their host
Threatens to break, to dissolve. —
Ah, keep, keep them combined!
Else, of the myriads who fill
That army, not one shall arrive;

Sole they shall stray ; on the rocks
Batter forever in vain,
Die one by one in the waste.

Then, in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Ye, like angels, appear,
Radiant with ardor divine.
Beacons of hope, ye appear !
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.
Ye alight in our van ! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away.
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, re-inspire the brave.

Order, courage, return ;
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God.

NOTES ON SOHRAB AND RUSTUM.

Line 1. "And." Note the incidental way in which the poem begins. Observe the same in such plays of Shakespeare as "As You Like It," and "Antony and Cleopatra."

Line 2. "Oxus." Principal river of Central Asia, the Amu Daria of modern times ("mother of rivers"). Its source is near the frontier of Eastern Turkestan. It flows W. and N.W., and empties into the Sea of Aral. It is 1400 miles long, and is navigable 300 miles from its mouth.

Line 3. "Tartar," sometimes written Tatar. The Tartars were a mongrel horde of warlike men, occupying what is now known as Manchuria and Mongolia.

Line 5. "Sohrab" (sō'-rāb), anciently written Suhrab, son of Rustum and Tahmineh.

Line 11. "Peran-Wisa" (pē'-rān ue'-sä). Head of King Afrasiab's army.

Line 15. "Pamere," more familiarly known as Pamir; the broad plateau in Central Asia, N.E. of Afghanistan. Its general elevation is 13,000 ft., some peaks rising to the height of 25,000 ft. It is a part of the lofty Himalayan range.

Line 38. "Afrasiab" (ä-frä-si-äb'), son of the Turanian king Pesheng and descendant of Tur.

Line 40. "Samarcand" (säm-är-känd'), a city of Turkestan. The ancient city was destroyed by Alexander the Great. In the middle ages it was the capital of Timur, and a seat of learning. The modern city has a population of 33,117, and carries on extensive trade in cotton, silk, etc.

Line 42. "Ader-baijan" (äd'-er-bī'-yän), one of the fourteen provinces into which Persia is divided.

Line 50. "Rustum" (rōös'-tum). Also spelled Rustam, Rostem, Rustem, etc. A hero of ancient Persia who figures in the "Shah-Namah," the book of chivalric tales of Firdusi, epic poet. Rustum was the son of Zal. Many legends are associated with his early life, his

phenomenal strength, and his marvellous exploits. He is supposed to have lived 600 B.C.

Line 60. "Common fight," a general engagement, where army meets army.

Line 69. "Single fight . . . single risk." It is Arnold's custom to repeat the same word for sake of emphasis. (See lines 269, 335, 689, 744.)

Line 82. "Seistan" (sā-ēs-tān'). Sometimes Sistan. A section of Eastern Persia and Afghanistan, bordering on the Helmund River. Under British arbitration in 1872, the country was divided into Sistan Proper and Outer Sistan.

Line 82. "Zal," a Persian warrior, known especially as the father of Rustum. He was born with white hair (see line 232). This being regarded by his father as an unpropitious sign, he was exposed to the biting winds of the mountains. A huge vulture delivered him from death: "that griffin, which of old rear'd Zal." (See line 679.)

Lines 83-85. "Whether that . . . Or in." Either because . . . or because of.

Line 92. "Ravenging." Greedily devouring, rapacious.

Line 101. "Kara-Kul" (kā-rä-köl') Lake in Central Asia, in the great Pamir plateau, 13,200 ft. above the sea, where sheep grazed.

Line 107. "Haman" (hä'-män). Also written Human. In the epic narrative of Firdusi, Haman, by a false statement, assures Sohrab that the man he is to meet in mortal combat is not Rustum — "This man in no wise resembleth him, or is his manner of wielding his club the same."

Line 113. "Casbin" (käs'-bēn). Also Kasbin and Kazvin. City of Persia, having at present 30,000 inhabitants. It was formerly capital of the province Irak-Ajemi, and a centre of learning.

Line 114. "Elburz" (el-börz) or Elbruz. A mountain range in Northern Persia, continuous with the Caucasus. Its highest peak is Demarend, 18,600 ft. above sea level.

Line 115. "Frore" — frozen. Note Milton's use of the word: —

"The parching air
Burns *frore*, and cold performs the effect of fire."

Line 119. "Bokhara," a khanate (province) of Central Asia; 92,000 sq. miles in area; noted for its wealth; 2,500,000 inhabitants; religion Mohammedan.

Line 120. "Khiva" (ke'-vä), a khanate in the valley of the Oxus, west of Bokhara. "Milk of mares," an intoxicant called *koumiss*,

distilled from the milk of mares of camels. It is still in general use among the Tartars.

Line 121. "Toorkmuns," or Turkomans, a nomadic race living in Central Asia, south of the Oxus.

Line 122. "Tukas," inhabitants of Central Asia. "Salore," region of the same.

Line 123. "Attruck." Also, Atrek. A river in Northern Persia, dividing that country and Russia. Its length is 250 miles and it empties into the Caspian Sea.

Line 127. "A more doubtful service owned," *i.e.* not sufficiently loyal to King Afrasiab as to be implicitly trusted.

Line 128. "Ferghana" (fer-ghä'-nä) or Fergana. A Russian province in Turkestan, Central Asia. Population, 785,000. The "Jaxartes" (Jak-sär'-tēz) is a river in Russian Central Asia. It rises in the Thian-Shan Mountains and empties into the Sea of Aral.

Line 131. "Kipchak" (kip-chäk'). "The Kingdom of the Golden Horde," an immense region, extending from the Dniester through Southern Russia and Western Siberia to Central Asia.

Line 132. "Kalmucks," or Calmucks. A wandering tribe, of Mongolian blood, having four branches, inhabiting the Chinese Empire, Western Siberia, and Southeastern Russia. They are rich in horses and cattle, are Buddhists, and number 200,000. "Kuzzaks" (kooz'-zaks). A military tribe living in the steppes of Russia, Siberia, etc. They are the modern Cossacks, and as light cavalry they do invaluable service in skirmishes on the Russian frontier.

Line 133. "Kirghizzes" (kīr-ghī-zeez). A wandering people of Mongolian-Tartar origin, dwelling in Southeastern Russia.

Line 138. "Ilyats of Khorassan" means the tribes of Khorassan — "the Land of the Sun," a province of Northeastern Persia, bordering on Russia. It is mainly desert, and has suffered from many hostile invasions.

Line 160. "Cabool," also Cabul and Kabul. The capital of Afghanistan, a city of commercial importance, and noted for its fruit. Captured by the English, under General Roberts, 1879-1880.

Line 161. "Indian Caucasus." The western extension of the Himalaya range, known as Hindu Kush. Loftiest peak, 23,000 ft. high.

Lines 171-172. "Gudurz" (goo'-doorz). "Zoarras" (zö-är'-röh). "Feraburz" (fe'-rä-boorz).

Line 200. "Falcon." It was the custom to train these birds of

prey to attack other birds. It is not uncommon to find in heraldry, a falconer with a falcon on his wrist.

"I see Lombards pouring down from the mountain gates with *falcons* on their thumbs."—D. G. MITCHELL, in *Wet Days*.

Lines 215–259. This piece of realistic, graphic colloquy is purely Homeric, and shows how accurate and fruitful was Arnold's study of the great bard.

Line 217. "Iran's chiefs" (*ē-rān*). Iran was the official name of Persia, from Iraz, the third son of Faridun, one of the leading heroes of the "Shah-Namah."

Line 223. "Kai Khosroo" (*kī-kos-roo'*). The thirteenth Persian king, who reigned sixty years. He is supposed to be Cyrus the Elder.

Lines 229–231. Notice the pathetic story, as told by Rustum; the deception practised by Tahmineh, mother of Sohrab.

Line 233. "Afghan," one of the Iranian race, which forms a large part of the population of Afghanistan.

Line 247. "Hoards his fame." Mark the magic effect of Gudurz' adroit intimation that Rustum would rest satisfied with a reputation even as great as his. (See line 256.)

Line 270. "Ruksh" (*rooksh*), written *Rakush* in the earliest legendary account. A splendid horse, the property of Rustum, faithful to his master, and which displays almost human intelligence. (See lines 730–755.)

Line 277. "Dight," arrayed, adorned. As in Spenser, "Faerie Queene," I. xii. 23.

"Oft had he seene her faire, but never so faire *dight*."

Line 286. "Bahrein" (*bā-rān*). A group of islands in the Persian Gulf, near Arabia, noted for their pearl-fisheries.

Line 288. "Tale," record, number.

"In parking, they kept a just *tale* of the number."—*Carew*.

Lines 285–290, 302–308, 314–318. Observe how the poet seems to hold in suspense the reader's attention by these forcible similes.

Line 337. "Sole." "Alone," as in the line from Howell:—

"I am oft-times *sole*, but seldom solitary."

Line 385. "Dread." To cause to fear, awe-inspiring; as, dread tribunal.

Line 409. "Unlopped," in its natural state, untrimmed. The

Cyclops, Polyphemus, used a pine tree as a walking-stick. ("Æneid," Bk. III.)

Line 412. "Hyphasis" (hi-fa'-sis), "Hydaspes" (hi-das'-peeze), historic rivers in Punjab, Northern India, the former rising in Tibet, the latter in Kashmir.

Line 414. "Wrack," wreck, ruin.

"Moaning and wailing for an heir to rule
After him, lest the realm should go to *wrack*."
— *Tennyson*, "Coming of Arthur."

Line 452. "Autumn-star," Sirius, the dog-star, an object of ominous superstition to the Persians.

Line 497. "Shore." A preterite of *shear*; obsolete.

Line 522. "And" is constantly repeated. Note that it begins twelve lines out of twenty-five, ending with line 530. Why this frequent use of *and*?

Line 570. "Glass," to reflect as a mirror.

"Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests." — *Byron*, "Childe Harold."

Line 577. "Prate," idle talk, prattle.

"If I talk to him, with his innocent *prate*,
He will awake my mercy which lies dead."
— *Shakespeare*, "King John."

Line 591. "That old King," Afrasiab.

Line 596. "Bruited-up," publicly announced.

Line 613. "Style," title, rank.

"The citizens salute you with the *style*
Of King of Naples." — *Fletcher*.

Line 659. "Seal." Our author has departed from the original story, as given by Firdusi, where an amulet was put upon the arm of Sohrab.

Line 664. "Corslet," armor for the breast and back, usually written corselet.

Line 671. "Vermilion," a bright red pigment, product of the insect cochineal.

Line 751. "Helmund" (hel-moond), a river of Afghanistan flowing southwesterly through Seistan, and emptying into Lake Hamun. Lake "Zirrah" is in the same region.

Lines 763-764. "Moorghab" (móor-gäb), Tejend (te-yend'), Kahik (ka-hik'). Rivers of Turkestan.

Line 765. "Sir." The Syr Daria, the ancient Jaxartes, emptying into the Sea of Aral.

Line 769. "Yellow silt." The fine deposit of sand from running or standing water.

Line 861. "Jemshid." The fourth Persian king of the earliest dynasty. He softened iron and taught its uses, taught weaving, invented medicine, and first practised navigation. He added to the magnificence of Persepolis, one of the Persian capitals, whose ruins are among the most massive known to modern times.

Line 880. "Orgunjè." A town on the Oxus, south of Khiva.

NOTES ON OTHER POEMS.



STAGIRIUS.

Stagirius was a young monk to whom the golden-mouthed St. Chrysostom dedicated his three books "On Tribulation and Providence." They can be found in the first of the thirteen volumes of the Benedictine edition, Paris, 1718-1738. St. Chrysostom endeavored to console the father of Stagirius, because of his grief, due to his son's having embraced the religious life. He urged him to bear up under his load of sorrow, and to have faith in God.

THE SCHOLAR-GYPSY.

"There was very lately a lad in the University of Oxford, who was by his poverty forced to leave his studies there ; and at last to join himself to a company of vagabond gypsies. Among these extravagant people, by the insinuating subtilty of his carriage, he quickly got so much of their love and esteem as that they discovered to him their mystery. After he had been a pretty while exercised in the trade, there chanced to ride by a couple of scholars, who had formerly been of his acquaintance. They quickly spied out their old friend among the gypsies ; and he gave them an account of the necessity which drove him to that kind of life, and told them that the people he went with were not such impostors as they were taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of imagination, their fancy binding that of others ; that himself had learned much of their art, and when he had compassed the whole secret, he intended, he said, to leave their company, and give the world an account of what he had learned." — GLANVIL'S *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, 1661.

THYRSIS.

Throughout this poem there is reference to the preceding poem, "The Scholar-Gypsy."

Arnold, writing his mother, under date of April, 1866, says of this poem: "Tell dear old Edward that the diction of the 'Thyrsis' was modelled on that of 'Theocritus,' whom I have been much reading during the two years the poem has been forming itself, and that I meant the diction to be so artless as to be almost heedless. . . . The images are all from actual observation. . . . The cuckoo in the wet June morning, I heard in the garden at Woodford, and all those three stanzas, which you like, are reminiscences of Woodford. Edward has, I think, fixed on the two stanzas I myself like best: 'O easy access,' and 'And long the way appears.' I also like, 'Where is the girl,' and the stanza before it; but that is because they bring certain places and moments before me. . . . It is probably too quiet a poem for the general taste, but I think it will stand wear."

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